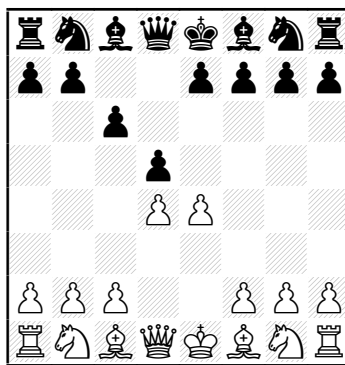


Caro-Kann [B10-19]

Written by GM Nigel Davies & IM Andrew Martin

Last updated Thursday, September 23, 2004



A solid system, used by such players as Karpov, Leko, and of course Botvinnik to win the World Championship against Tal. Black gains a foothold in the centre, much as in the French Defence, whilst keeping the h3-c8 diagonal open for his light-squared bishop.

Black often plays steadily, hoping first to equalise before taking the initiative, but can also play dynamically as in the Larsen/Bronstein line.

All the games given in [blue](#) can be accessed via ChessPub.exe, simply head for their respective ECO code.

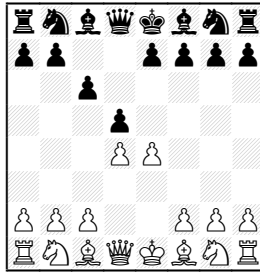
Contents

1 e4 c6 2 d4

2 ♘e2 Caro-Kann-Unusual lines [B10]

2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗f3 ♕g4 Caro-Kann-1 e4 c6 2 Nc3 d5 3 Nf3 Bg4 [B11]

2...d5



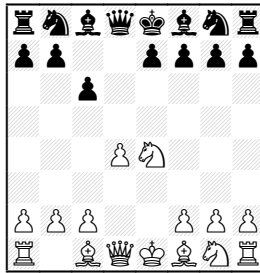
3 ♘c3

3 f3 Caro-Kann-Fantasy Variation- 3 f3 [B12]

3 e5 ♕f5 (3...c5 Caro-Kann-Advance- 3...c5 & 3...Na6 [B12]) 4 ♘c3 Caro-Kann-Advance with 3...Bf5 [B12]

3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 (4 ♕d3 Caro-Kann-Exchange Variation [B13]) 4...♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 (5...g6 Caro-Kann-Panov- 5...g6, 5...e6 [B14]) 6 ♕g5 Caro-Kann-Panov Attack- 5...Nc6 [B13]

3...dxe4 4 ♗xe4



4...Bf5

4...Nf6 5 Nxf6+ exf6 (5...gxf6 Caro-Kann-Larsen/Bronstein, 5...gxf6 [B16]) 6 c3 Caro-Kann- Nc3 Intro & Korchnoi's 5...exf6 [B15]

4...Nd7 Caro-Kann-Smyslov- 4...Nd7 [B17]

5 Ng3 Bg6 6 h4

6 Bc4 Caro-Kann-Classical 4...Bf5 intro [B18]

6...h6 7 Nf3

Caro-Kann-Classical 4...Bf5 mainline [B19]

Press F5 to toggle the Navigation Pane, then click on the appropriate bookmark to go straight to that section.

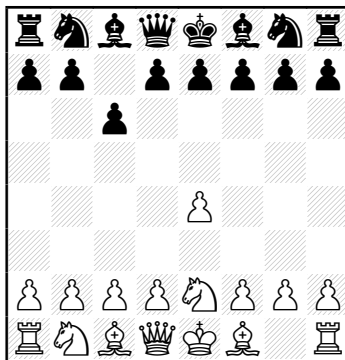
Ctrl + 2 resizes the page.

All rights reserved Chess Publishing Ltd

Caro-Kann – Unusual lines [B10]

Last updated: 10/08/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 ♘e2



Others:

2 ♘c3 d5

- a) 3 f4!? Most irregular and a recommendation of veteran Dutch Master Van Geet. White plans to grip e5 and commence an eventual Kingside attack. 3...dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘f6 (4...♘d7 is logical, 5 ♘f3 ♘gf6 6 ♘f2 e6 [Kokholm,D–Hansen,J/25th Politiken Cup, Copenhagen DEN 2003](#)) 5 ♘f2 e6 (5...♙c7 6 g3 ♙e6 [Wall,G–Speelman,J/4NCL Birmingham 2001](#)) 6 ♘f3 ♙d6 7 g3 ♙c7 [Reefschlaeger,H–Krajewski,W/Bad Woerishofen 2001](#).
- b) 3 ♘f3 a6!? (3...h6 has been played by Matthew Sadler. The idea is to take on e4 and play ...Bf5) 4 h3 e6 5 d4 ♘d7 6 ♙d3 dxe4 7 ♘xe4 ♘gf6 8 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 9 ♙g5± [Vasiesiu,D–Vajda,A/ch-ROM, Satu Mare ROM 2003](#).
- c) 3 ♙f3 3...e6 A number of strong players have tried this move, though it seems to me that White maintains excellent attacking chances. There is a quick tour of the alternatives in [Arapovic–Campora](#). 4 d4 ♘f6 5 ♙g5!? This is really in the spirit of 3 Qf3 and probably much stronger than the more popular 5 e5. 5...♙e7 6 e5 ♘fd7 7 ♙xe7 (7h4!? is worth a thought, with similar play to the Alekhine–Chatard Attack against the French.) 7...♙xe7 8 ♙g3 [Arapovic,V–Campora,D/Mendrisio \(Switzerland\) 1988](#).
- 2 c4! This is looking like a decent surprise weapon.
- a) 2...d5 is more like the Caro, 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 (4 d4 transposes to the Panov.) 4...♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♘xd5 6 ♘f3 ♘xc3 7 bxc3 the best move, 7...g6 8 d4 (8 ♙c4 [Peptan,C–Danielian,E/Olympiad w, Bled SLO 2002](#)) 8...♙g7 9 ♙d3 0-0 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 ♙e1

♙g4 12 ♙e4 e5! An excellent improvement on either 12...♞c8 or 12...♞d7. Black liquidates the centre pawns, obtaining complete equality, [Aronian,L-Carlsen,M/Tripoli 2004](#).

b) 2...e5 3 ♖f3 ♞a5 4 ♗c3

b1) Black should probably abandon this move in favour of 4...♗f6, but even so I think his position is far from pleasant after 5 ♙e2! (or even 5 a3) 5...♙b4 6 ♞c2 0-0 7 0-0 d5 8 cxd5 cxd5 9 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 10 exd5 ♗d7 11 ♙c4 ♞c7 12 ♙d3 ♞xc2 13 ♙xc2± It is very difficult for Black to get his pawn back without allowing the White pieces to dominate. He plays for pressure but fails miserably, [Pelletier,Y-Seger,R/Bundesliga 2002](#)

b2) 4...♙b4?! 5 ♗a4! A new move. The idea of a3 followed by b4 sends Black's queen and bishop running for cover. 5...♗f6 6 a3 ♙e7 7 b4 ♞c7 8 d4 d6 9 ♙b2 ♗bd7 10 ♙d3 White soon converts his space advantage into a virulent initiative, [Rahman,Z-Abdulla,A/Dhaka BAN 2001](#).

Several strong attacking players have consistently adopted a King's Indian Attack formation against the Caro: 2 d3 d5 3 ♗d2

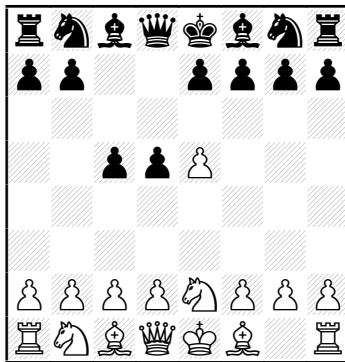
a) 3...g6 4 ♗gf3 (4 g3 ♙g7 5 ♙g2 e5 6 ♗gf3 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 b4!? a5 9 bxa5 ♞xa5 10 ♙b2 ♞c7 11 ♞e2 d4 12 c3 dxc3 13 ♙xc3 was better for White in [Stein,L-Haag,E/Tallinn 1969](#)) 4...♙g7 5 g3 (5 ♙e2 e5 6 0-0 ♗e7 7 b4! 0-0 8 ♙b2 ♗d7 9 ♞e1 a5 10 a3 ♞c7 11 ♙f1 with typical pressure against e5 in [Ljubojevic,L-Pfleger,H/Manila 1975](#)) 5...♗f6 6 ♙g2 dxe4 7 dxe4 0-0 8 0-0 ♗a6 9 e5 ♗d5 10 ♗b3 ♙g4 11 ♞e2 ♞c8 12 ♞e1 left Black cramped in [Stein,L-Portisch,L/Moscow 1967](#)

b) 3...e5 4 ♗gf3 ♙d6 5 ♙e2 (5 g3 ♗f6 6 ♙g2 0-0 7 h3!? ♞e8 8 0-0 a5 9 ♞e1 ♗a6 10 d4! gave White the initiative in [Sax,G-Martin,A/Hastings 1983](#) 5 ♞e2 ♗f6 6 d4 dxe4 7 ♗xe5 ♙f5 8 h3 h5 9 ♞g1 h4 10 g4 hxg3 11 ♞xg3 produced a chaotic game in [Ljubojevic,L-Karpov,A/Hastings 1992](#)) 5...♗f6 6 d4 ♗xe4 7 dxe5 ♗xd2 8 ♞xd2 ♙c7 9 0-0 0-0 10 c4 ♙g4 11 ♗g5 led to equality in [Ljubojevic,L-Dzindzhashvili,R/Tilburg 1978](#)

c) 3...dxe4 4 dxe4 ♗f6 5 ♗gf3 ♙g4 6 h3 ♙h5 7 e5 ♗d5 8 e6 f6 9 g4 ♙g6 10 ♗d4 ♗c7 11 c3 ♞d5 12 ♞b3! [Stein,L-Birbrager,I/Moscow 1966](#)

2 ♗f3 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♗e5!? is a new one on me. It looks like a 'cheapo' move but White's threats based on ♙b5 cannot be discounted. 4...♗d7 (4...♗c6 5 d4 ♗f6 6 ♙b5 [Sebag,M-Xu Yuanyuan/Cannes FRA 2004](#)) 5 d4 g6! A new move, wasting no time, in contrast to White! 6 ♗c3 ♙g7 7 ♙b5 ♗gf6 8 ♞f3 0-0 9 ♙f4 ♗xe5 10 dxe5 ♗e4 11 0-0-0 ♗xc3 12 ♞xc3 ♙f5∞ Perhaps Black has the better attacking chances, [Cernousek,L-Mista,A/Brno CZE 2004](#). We may deduce that White's tricky opening idea can only lead to equality at best.

2...d5 3 e5 c5



3...♔f5 The move that 2.Ne2 is designed against. White certainly seems to get something but it's not necessarily so bad. 4 ♖g3 (White has also played 4 ♖d4, but this looks as if it involves too much hopping around. Even the e5–e6 tricks associated with this idea look unconvincing and I think that Black can cold-bloodedly play 4...♔g6!?)
 4...♔e6 With White's knight on the more sensible g3 square it's probably wise to prevent these e5–e6 pawn sacs: 5 d4 g6 6 c3 The game now proceeds at a totally different pace, with solid positional manoeuvres being the order of the day. White has more space, but it's difficult to break through because of Black's control of f5.
 6...h5 7 ♔d3 ♖c8 8 h4 [Short,N–Sasikiran,K/Istanbul TUR 2000](#).

4 d4

The conventional move.

4 b4!/? The idea is similar to a gambit line that I like against the French

1.e4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4!/? 4...cxb4 5 d4 White doesn't have to worry about the usual counterplay against his d4 pawn but can just get on with his play on the kingside. The cost is a pawn, but maybe it's not bad value. (5 ♔b2 was tried in Sorensen – Hellstrom, Copenhagen 1998 but it doesn't make much sense to me. The bishop on b2 does nothing more than bite on it's own e5 pawn and Black was a pawn up for very little after 5...♖c6 6 d4 e6) 5...♖c6 6 a3 e6 7 axb4 ♔xb4+ 8 c3 ♔c7 [Richmond,P–Lee,G/England 1999](#).

4...♖c6 5 c3 cxd4

5...e6 Some of the books give this move, quoting an old Bronstein – Petrosian game that Black happened to win. 6 ♖d2

- a) The aforementioned Bronstein – Petrosian game (USSR Ch., Leningrad 1960) went 6...♖ge7 7 ♖f3 cxd4 8 ♖exd4 (The start of a dubious plan. White should play 8 cxd4 after which 8...♖f5 transposes back into the game) 8...♖g6
- b) 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♖h6 8 ♖f3 ♖f5 9 a3 ♖b6 10 g4 ♖fe7 11 ♖f4 It's starting to look very good for White

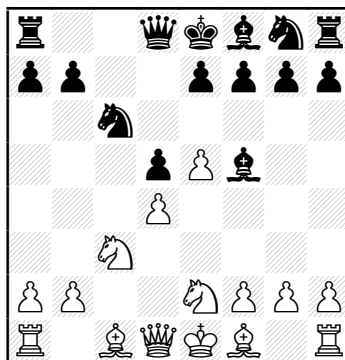
the d4 pawn is not a problem and he has lots of space on the kingside. Black manages to generate some temporary piece activity but this doesn't amount to anything real.
 11...♖a5 12 ♜b1 ♘b3 13 ♙e3 Kasparov,G–Kaiumov,D/Tbilisi (Georgia) 1976.

5...♙f5 6 dxc5 This is the move that got Black to start taking on d4 before playing ...Bf5. (The old line was 6 ♘g3 ♙g6) 6...e6 7 b4 a5?! The fact that White can ignore this move, makes it look like a loss of time. (7...♘xe5 is probably better, even though Black's bishop is unable to come back to d7.) 8 ♘d4 axb4 9 cxb4 ♜c7 (And not 9...♘xb4 10 ♙b5+) 10 ♙b5 ♙xb1 11 ♜xb1 ♞xc5+ 12 ♙e3 ♞c7 13 0-0 ♙e7 14 ♙xc6+ bxc6 15 b5 It's now quite clear that Black's opening has backfired. The action is starting whilst Black's king is uncastled. 15...cxb5 16 ♘xb5 Short,N–Gulko,B/Horgen (Switzerland) 1995.

An interesting alternative is 5...♙g4!? which argues that 6 f3 is a concession by White. In Barendregt – Botvinnik, Amsterdam 1966 Black went on to obtain an excellent game after 6...♙d7 7 e6 ♙xe6 8 dxc5 ♘f6 9 b4 g6 10 ♙f4 ♙g7 11 ♘d4 0-0 12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 ♙e5 ♙h6 14 ♙d3 ♘d7 15 ♙d4 f6 16 0-0 ♙f7 17 a4 e5 18 ♙f2 f5 though surprisingly the former World Champion lost this game.

5...h5?! was played in Pedersen – Borbjerggaard, Aarhus 1996, but to me it looks far too extravagant. The game reeled on with the moves 6 a3 (and 6 ♘d2) 6...♙f5 7 dxc5 e6 8 b4 a5 9 ♘d4 axb4 10 ♘xc6 (10 ♙b5!?) 10...bxc6 11 cxb4 ♘e7 12 ♙d3 ♞b8 13 ♙b2 and now Black's 13...g5?! was a desperate-looking move in what is probably a lost position.

6 cxd4 ♙f5 7 ♘bc3



I didn't know it at the time, but this is a new move.

The conventional treatment is with 7 ♘g3 ♙g6 8 ♘c3 e6 but this does not seem to be very effective.

7...e6 8 a3 a6 9 ♙e3 f6 10 h3 h5

Speelman decides to stop g2–g4 but in doing so has to accept permanent kingside weakness.

Taking the pawn with 10...fxe5 11 dxe5 ♖xe5 looks downright bad after 12 ♗d4 intending g2-g4.

11 exf6 ♗xf6 12 g3

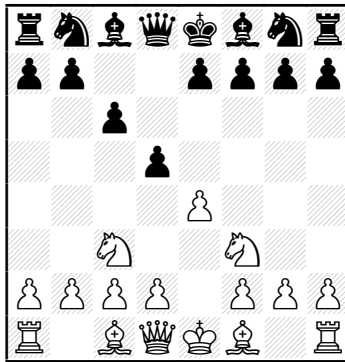
Davies,N-Speelman,J/Southend ENG 1999.

Caro-Kann – 1 e4 c6 2 Nc3 d5 3 Nf3 Bg4

[B11]

Last updated: 08/10/03 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 Nc3 d5 3 Nf3



The two Knights variation had its heyday in the 1950s and 60s but may well deserve reviving. This system is attractive for players who do not like to play deeply analysed variations. Although theoretically it does not promise too much for White, the positions that arise are complicated, and it's still not clear how Black can achieve equality without any trouble.

3...Bg4

Black has tried a lot of moves here but this Bishop sortie is the main line.

4 h3 Bxf3 5 Qxf3

5 Qxf3 has had a poor reputation since Tal got a bad game with the move in his 1960 match against Botvinnik. But in his book on the match Tal commented that after 5...e6 6 d4 Qd7 it would have been much better to play 7 Qe3 followed by Qd2 and 0-0-0 rather than his mistaken 7 Bf4. In any case this deserves further tests as White has the bishop pair and a very strong centre.

5...e6 6 d4

White tries another interesting and dynamic continuation involving a pawn sac. The Two Knights has been out of fashion for years but because of that has far more surprise value than the currently popular Advance Variation.

6 d3 ♖f6 would lead to one of the main lines. 7 ♖g3 (7 ♗d2 is considered to be the main line here.)

a) 7... ♗a6 8 ♗e2 dxe4 9 dxe4 ♗c5 10 ♗f3 g6 11 ♗g5 ♗e7 12 ♖d1 ♗fd7 (12... ♖b6? loses immediately due to 13 ♖e5 ♗cd7 14 ♖xd7!) 13 ♗e3 Black has problems, [Tkachiev, V–Podgaets, M/Vienna 1996](#).

b) 7... ♗a6

6 g3!? ♗f6 7 ♗g2 ♗b4 8 0-0 ♗xc3 9 ♖xc3 dxe4 10 d3 exd3 11 ♖d1 ♗bd7 12 ♖xd3 0-0 13 ♗g5 [Dvoirys, S–Grischuk, A/56th ch–RUS, Krasnoyarsk RUS 2003](#).

6...♗f6

6... ♖b6?! This continuation looks dubious. 7 ♗d3! The pawn cannot be defended by natural means so White just ignores the threat, especially as he is well ahead in development. 7... ♗f6 8 0-0 ♖xd4 9 exd5!? (This position was familiar to Balashov. In an earlier game vs. Lechtynsky, Trnava 1988 he preferred 9 ♗e3 ♖b4 10 exd5) 9... ♗xd5 10 ♖d1 ♖f6 11 ♖g3 ♗d7 12 ♗xd5 cxd5 13 ♗g5 White's initiative grows quickly, [Balashov, Y–Smagin, S/Elista 1995](#).

6...dxe4 7 ♖xe4 is more common as the text involves a pawn sacrifice. Nevertheless it seems that White gets quite good compensation.

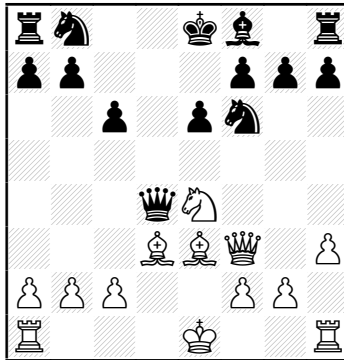
7 ♗d3 dxe4

or 7... ♗e7

8 ♗xe4 ♖xd4

Or 8... ♗bd7 with a very solid position.

9 ♗e3!



Better than the passive 9 c3?! ♖d8 10 0-0 ♗bd7 11 ♕f4 ♗xe4 (White wanted to keep his investment down to a single pawn but he might have regretted his decision after 11...♗c5, as after 12 ♜ad1 ♗cxe4 13 ♕xe4 ♖b6 White does not have f3 available as a retreat square for his bishop.) 12 ♕xe4 ♖b6 13 ♗g3 ♗f6 14 ♕f3 A nice post for the bishop as it stops Black's knight coming to h5. 14...♕e7 15 ♕e3 [Nevednichy, V–Iordachescu, V/Bucharest ROM 2001](#).

9...♗d8

9...♕b4+ By throwing in the check Black hopes to gain time by developing his bishop and force White's king to remain in the centre. The negative side of this plan is that a White rook comes to the d–file more quickly. 10 ♖e2 ♗d8 11 ♜hd1!? ♗xe4 12 ♕xe4 ♖e7 13 ♖f1 [Boleslavsky, I–Makogonov, V/Moscow \(Russia\) 1940](#).

9...♗xb2 is the book 'recommendation' which takes the view that White has inadequate compensation for the pawns. But after 10 0-0 I would not want to touch Black's position with a very long barge pole – White has a massive lead in development and plenty of open files

10 0-0-0!

New moves aren't necessarily any better than the old ones. Boleslavsky's choice is certainly stronger than 10 ♗xf6+ which gave White very little for his pawn after 10...♗xf6 11 ♗g3 ♗d7 12 0-0 e5 in [Belkhodja – Ibragimov, Cappelle la Grande 2001](#).

10...♗bd7 11 ♕c4

11 ♖b1 also gives a very promising position: 11...♗xe4 12 ♕xe4 ♖c7 13 ♕f4 ♖c8 14 g4 ♕e7 15 g5 e5 16 ♕f5!± exf4 17 ♕xd7+ ♖xd7 18 ♜xd7 ♖xd7 19 ♗xf4+– [Parligras, M–Svetushkin, D/Bucharest 2003](#) In view of this type of continuation it seems better for Black to decline White's kind offer with 8...Nbd7!

11...♗a5 12 ♕d2 ♖b6 13 ♜he1 ♗xe4 14 ♜xe4 ♗f6 15 ♕xe6!! with White going on to win brilliantly, [Boleslavsky, I–Flohr, S/Moscow \(Russia\) 1950](#).

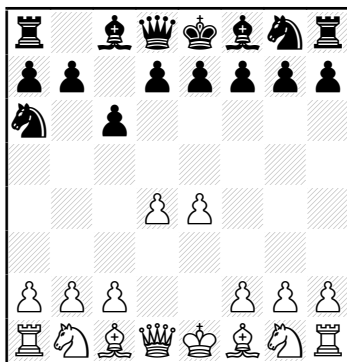
Caro-Kann – Fantasy Variation– 3 f3

[B12]

Last updated: 10/07/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5

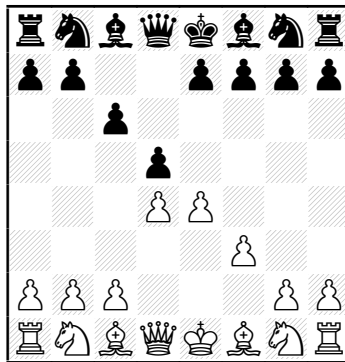
2... ♞a6



The knight heads for the newly vacated c7 square. Obviously this plan is not intended to rip White limb from limb, but it has the benefit of avoiding theory whilst being both solid and provocative. This eccentric defensive system, pioneered by the Belgian player De Bruycker, keeps the position closed and puts the emphasis on heavy middlegames in which White has more space. Besides Miles, Bent Larsen and Julian Hodgson have given it a try and a few other good players seem to have adopted it to the exclusion of everything else. At any rate it should be a good line to play against computers – no theory and stodgy positional manoeuvres. 3 ♞c3 White chooses to block his c-pawn but keep the option of a later f-pawn advance. (Tony Miles also faced 3 ♞f3 a couple of times, which keeps the option of advancing White's c-pawn: 3... ♞c7 4 c4 d6 5 ♞c3 g6 6 h3 ♟g7 7 ♟e3 f5 8 ♞d2 fxe4 9 ♞xe4 ♞f6 10 ♞g3 0-0 11 ♟e2 b5 12 b3 bxc4 13 bxc4 ♟d7 1/2-1/2, Andersson U. (2623) – Miles A. (2588), Biel 1996 It 3 c4 This is the kind of move Botvinnik would have recommended. White sets up a broad pawn chain and will have space however Black plays it. 3...d6 4 ♞c3 g6 5 ♟e3 ♟g7 6 ♞d2 e5 7 ♞ge2 ♞e7 8 0-0-0 f5 I can't help thinking that this might be asking a bit much of the position. But Miles probably reasoned that he didn't mind taking a few risks against the ex-Soviet veteran. 9 exf5 gxf5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 f4 [Suctin,A–Miles,A/Cappelle la Grande \(France\) 1997](#).

Black profits from the fact that 3 $\text{Qxa6}?!$ doesn't damage the black pawn structure— Black replies 3... Wa5+ , and 4... Qxa6 .) 3... Nc7 4 Nf3 In such uncharted territory it's difficult to say what the best line is. White has tried several other moves in this position. 4... g6 5 Qc2 I'm not quite sure if this is now becoming a Pirc. 5... Qg7 6 0-0 d6 7 h3 e5?! I'm slightly suspicious of this move. Because of the need to protect his e-pawn, Black either put his king's knight on the passive e7 square or first give up the centre with ... exd4 . (7... Nf6 is quite possible and would transpose into a Pirc) 8 Qe3 [Hracek,Z–Markovic,M/Herceg Novi YUG 2001](#).

3 f3



The Fantasy Variation has been rarely played but nowadays it is becoming more and more popular, primarily due to the efforts of Michael Adams who is the main adherent of this line at top level. It often leads to very sharp positions especially if Black chooses 3... dxe4 4 fxe4 e5.

3...dxe4!?

The sharpest solid alternatives:

3... g6

a) 4 Nc3 Qg7 A natural and good move. 5 Qe3 $\text{Wb6}!$ The best move in this position as practice has proved. The alternatives are clearly inferior. 6 Wd2 This temporary pawn sacrifice is the only attempt to fight for an advantage. (Both 6 Bb1 e5 and 6 $\text{a3}?!$ allow 6... e5 with good prospects for Black 6 Nd4 is also hardly promising: 6... Wa5+ 7 c3 Nd7 and White's pieces are uncoordinated.) 6... Wxb2 7 Bb1 Wa3 8 exd5 $\text{Nf6}!$ Returning his extra pawn Black completes his development. 9 dxc6 $\text{bxc6}!$ The correct decision. In recapturing with the pawn Black gets additional control over the centre and intends ... Bc8–a6 . 10 Qd3 [Adams,M–Leko,P/Tilburg 1996](#).

b) 4 c3 After 4 Nc3 Adams got absolutely nothing from the opening in his game against Leko, so he deviates first. 4... Qg7

b1) 5 Qf4 was rather popular, but after the game Mitkov–Hebert, Cannes 1995 it is completely out of fashion: 5... $\text{Nd7}!$ (intending 6... e7–e5) 6 e5 (6 Qd3 e5) 6... $\text{f6}!$

Undermining the pawn chain and White can't strengthen the centre by his f-pawn in view of the bad position of his dark-square bishop. 7 exf6 ♖gxf6! 8 ♔d3 0-0 9 ♗e2 e5! Seizing the initiative.

b2) 5 ♕e3 White has also tried other moves, but they are weaker: 5...e5!? A new and very interesting continuation. (5...♗f6?! is weak as the French-like position after 6 e5 ♗fd7 7 f4 e6 8 ♗f3 clearly favors White (Black's dark-squared bishop is misplaced on g7). and 5...♖b6 which was good in Adams-Leko is now senseless in view of 6 ♖d2) 6 dxe5 ♕xe5 7 ♗d2 ♗e7 8 ♖c2 White prepares Q-side castling. 8...0-0! A brave and correct decision. Now a very sharp position with opposite sides castling arises where Black's chances are by no means worse. 9 0-0-0 [Adams,M-Seirawan,Y/Bermuda 1999](#). In spite of his loss in this game Black had many good possibilities and we can conclude that 3...g6 is a very solid and promising line for Black.

3...e6 4 ♗c3 (4 ♕e3?! This line has a dubious reputation. 4...♖b6! Now White is practically forced to sacrifice his b2-pawn. 5 ♗d2 ♖xb2 6 ♕d3 ♖a3 This position has occurred in 2 games and in both White failed to prove he has enough for the pawn, [Mitkov,N-Dreev,A/European Club Cup 2000](#).) 4...♕b4 Continuing play in vein of the French Winawer variation. 5 ♕f4 (5 ♕d2 b6 6 ♕d3 ♗e7 7 ♗ge2 0-0 8 0-0 c5 was Hector – Danielsen, Reykjavik ISL 2001) 5...♗f6 (5...♗e7 6 ♖d3 b6 7 ♗ge2 ♕a6 8 ♖e3 0-0 9 0-0-0 c5 10 a3 ♕xc3! 11 ♖xc3 ♕xe2! 12 ♕xe2 c4! 13 h4 b5∞ [Morozevitch,A-Bologan,V/Moscow RUS 2004](#), the blocked pawn position suits the knights but obviously Black will have to be very careful to contain White's bishops and his kingside chances.) 6 ♖d3 b6 7 ♗ge2 ♕a6 8 ♖e3 0-0 9 0-0-0 ♕e7 (9...b5!? immediately is worthy of consideration, but sooner or later the Bishop will have to retreat from the b4 square anyway.) 10 g4! b5! An interesting race is brewing on opposite sides of the board. (It's very dangerous to grab the pawn: 10...dxe4 11 fxe4 ♗xg4 12 ♖f3 ♗f6 13 ♖g1 and White's attack grows rapidly, but 10...c5 is also feasible, [McShane,L-Dreev,A/18th North Sea Cup, Esbjerg DEN 2003](#)) 11 ♗g3 [Wall,T-Hodgson,J/Great Britain \(ch\) 1990](#).

4 fxe4 e5

This is the idea behind Black's previous move, otherwise White has an overwhelming advantage in the centre. This line has quite a dubious reputation since Black has suffered many quick losses. Nevertheless in my opinion it's perfectly playable for Black (provided he knows the theory, of course!).

5 ♗f3

Not 5 dxe5?? ♖h4+

5...♕g4!

In my opinion this line is the best.

The pressure on Black's f7-pawn could have been shielded by the theoretical recommendation of 5...♕e6 intending 6 ♗xe5? (or 6 dxe5 ♖xd1+ 7 ♕xd1 ♗d7 with good play

but White should prefer 6 c3 ♘f6 7 ♕d3) 6...♖h4+

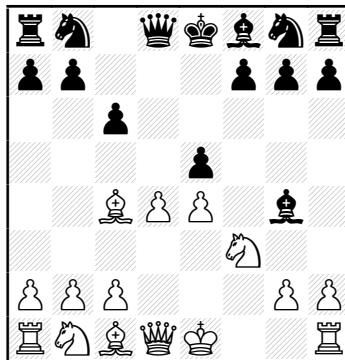
5...exd4?! This is an instructive mistake after which White's initiative grows rapidly. This move has been considered insufficient since the end of the 19th century, nevertheless in my database I have found hundreds of recent games where Black committed this mistake! Black has two superior possibilities. 6 ♕c4 Developing pieces and creating concrete threats. The development advantage and open f-file secures White a decisive attack. The f7-square is the main target.

a) 6...♕b4+? Another mistake which loses on the spot, but Black's defence was very hard anyway: 7 c3! dxc3 8 ♕xf7+! A typical blow. 8...♖xf7?! (8...♗e7 is more stubborn although after 9 ♖b3! cxb2+ 10 ♗xb4+ ♖xf7 11 ♕xb2 at the cost of only one pawn White has crushing attack.) 9 ♗xd8 cxb2+ 10 ♖e2 ♕c7 (10...bxa1 ♗ 11 ♘g5+ ♖g6 12 ♗e8+ and in V.Ivanov–Bataev, St Petersburg 1999 Black resigned in view of quick mate after 12...♗h6 13 ♘e6+) 11 ♘e5+ ♖f6 12 ♖f1+ [Maiorov,O–Gutov,A/Yalta 1995](#).

b) 6...♕e6 is also insufficient: 7 ♕xe6 fxe6 8 0-0 ♕c5 (8...♕e7 was played in an old game Tartakover–Psepurka, 1929, where White obtained a decisive advantage after 9 ♘xd4 ♗d7 10 ♗h5+ ♖d8 11 ♕e3 c5 12 ♖d1 cxd4 13 ♖xd4 ♕d6 14 e5) 9 ♘g5! d3+ (9...♗e7 10 ♘f7 ♗xf7 11 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 12 ♗h5+ 9...♘f6 10 e5 ♘d5 11 ♘xe6 ♗e7 12 ♗g4 ♗d7 13 ♘g7+ ♖d8 14 e6) 10 ♖h1 dxc2 11 ♗xc2 and White wins, Skripchenko–Tsiganova, Elista 1998

c) 6...♕e7 7 0-0 (Not 7 ♘e5?? ♗a5+) 7...♘f6 8 ♘g5 0-0 9 e5 Although this is recommended in many books in my opinion is not as strong as (9 ♘xf7! ♖xf7 10 ♕xf7+ ♖xf7 11 e5 winning an exchange.) 9...♘d5 10 ♗h5 ♕xg5 11 ♕xg5 [Lindberg,B–Celander,J/Stockholm, Sweden 2000](#).

6 ♕c4



6...♘d7 7 0-0 ♘gf6

Forced as 9.Bxf7+ was threatened.

8 c3 ♕d6 9 ♗b3

Before this game this line was considered as insufficient for Black since "Black can't protect both the b7 and f7 pawns" (as I've read in a certain opening book). After this game this evaluation should be reconsidered.

Last month I played this line with Black, and in Trygstad–Volzhin, Bergen 2000. White preferred the quiet 9 ♕e3 0-0 10 ♖bd2 but Black obtained a very good game after 10...b5 11 ♕d3 ♗c7 12 ♗e1 ♕h5! Transferring the Bishop to the g6–square where it occupies an ideal position: here it defends the king and creates pressure against the e4–pawn.

9...0-0! 10 ♗xb7

Otherwise White's previous move is senseless.

10...exd4 11 cxd4 ♖b6

The critical position for assessment of Black's idea.

12 ♕b3

12 ♕d3 is strongly met by the unexpected 12...♕xf3 13 ♖xf3 ♕f4! and Black wins the pawn back obtaining the better chances: 14 ♖xf4 (or 14 ♖c3 ♗xd4+ 15 ♔h1 ♕xc1 16 ♖xc1 ♖g4 and Black is better.) 14...♗xd4+ 15 ♔h1 ♗xd3 and White's position is horrible.

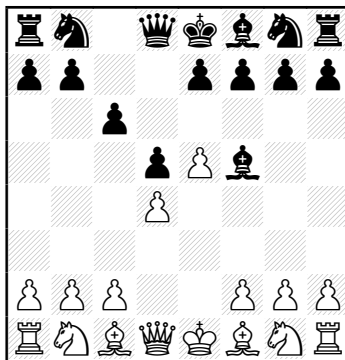
12...♖xe4

Peregudov,N–Savon,V/St.Petersburg 1994.

Caro-Kann – Advance with 3...Bf5 [B12]

Last updated: 10/07/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♞f5



4 ♞c3

In the Advance Variation with 3...Bf5 White has a wide choice on the 4th move. But currently only two lines are really popular. The first is the very sharp approach of the text.

The other is the positional line 4 ♞f3 with Be2 and 0-0 to follow. This line is a favourite of Nigel Short and brought him many excellent victories (even in the candidates match against Karpov!). 4...e6 5 ♞e2 (5 a3!? Not totally new but certainly totally surprising for Salem! 5...c5 6 c4 this is the idea, [Rausis,I–Salem,A/Open, Sharjah UAE 2003](#). It is remarkable how many new ideas are coming forward in the Advance Caro these days.) 5...c5 6 ♞e3 see [Svidler,P–Anand,V/Moscow RUS 2002](#).

4 ♞d3 is nothing special, 4...♞xd3 5 ♞xd3 e6 6 ♞c3 ♞b6 7 ♞ge2 c5 (Black can also delay this, for example 7...♞a6 8 ♞h3 ♞d7 9 0-0 [Sax,G–Arlandi,E/Mitropa Cup, Baden 1999](#) or 7...♞e7 (!) 8 0-0 ♞d7 9 ♞f4 c5 [Shabalov,A–Kacheishvili,G/Stratton Mountain, Vermont US 1999](#)) 8 dxc5 ♞xc5 9 0-0 ♞e7 10 ♞a4 ♞c6 11 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 12 ♞e3 ♞c7 13 f4 ♞f5 14 c3 ♞c6 15 ♞ad1 [Nimzowitsch,A–Capablanca,J/New York 1927](#).

4 ♞e3!? has suddenly become trendy, and was played a lot in the Russia–ROW match: 4...♞b6!? (4...e6 is a solid alternative, [Smirin,I–Dreev,A/Moscow RUS 2002](#)) 5 ♞c1 a) 5...♞h6!? is surprisingly popular with high–level players. Black intends either...Ng4 or...Nf5 at some point. I am very doubtful whether Black can even think about

equalization. 6 ♖f3 (6 h3 e6 7 ♗f3 Smirin,I–Bareev,E/Moscow RUS 2002) 6...e6 7 c4 (7 ♗bd2 c5 8 ♗b3 ♗d7 9 dxc5 ♗xc5 10 ♗fd4 is Svidler,P–Shirov,A/EuTCh, Plovdiv BUL 2003, where White kept his play strictly central, emphasizing the poor position of the knight on h6. It cost Black time to get this piece into the game.) 7...dxc4 8 ♗bd2 ♗d3 9 ♗xd3 cxd3 10 ♗xh6 gxh6 11 0-0 ♗d7 12 ♖d1 ♖a6 13 ♗e4 ♖g8 14 ♗e1 0-0-0 15 ♗xd3 It's up to White to prove that his small advantages of pawn structure and good centralised Knights vs dodgy Bishop mean something, Anand,V–Khenkin,I/Bundesliga 2002.

b) 5...e6 6 c4 ♗xb1! (6...♗e7?! 7 c5! and Black was crushed in Kasparov,G–Shirov,A/Moscow RUS 2002) 7 ♖xb1 ♗b4+ 8 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 9 ♖xd2 with a little extra space to White, Gelfand,B–Dreev,A/Moscow RUS 2002.

4 g4 is not trendy at all, a throwback to the heyday of Mikhail Tal. Morozevich demonstrates that the idea is still playable, 4...♗d7 (4...♗e4! If the evidence of the following snippet is to be believed, 4...Be4 is superior. 5 f3 ♗g6 6 h4 h5 7 ♗e2 e6 8 ♗f4 hxg4 9 ♗xg6 fxg6 10 ♖d3 ♗d7! 11 ♖xg6 gxf3 12 ♗h3 ♖xh4+ 13 ♗f1 ♖xh3+ 14 ♖xh3 ♖xh3→ Hulshof,P–L'Ami,E/Hoogeveen 2003 Black can play without these heroics but the Queen sacrifice put a lot of pressure on White and he caved in after 27 moves.) 5 c4 e6?! Zontakh is caught on the nose. Better is (5...h5! 6 gxh5 ♗f5 7 ♗c3 e6 8 ♗f3 ♗g4 9 ♖b3 ♖b6∞) 6 ♗c3 h5 7 g5 ♗e7 8 ♗f3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗g6 10 ♗d3 ♗e7 11 ♗xg6 fxg6 12 ♗h4!± Morozevich,A–Zontakh,A/Tallinn 2003.

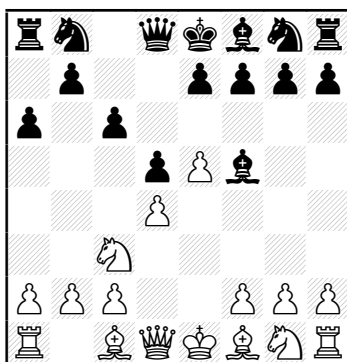
4 ♗d2!/? Trying to dissuade ...c5 presumably. 4...e6 5 ♗b3!/? ♗d7 6 ♗f3 ♗g6 7 ♗e2 ♗e7 8 0-0 ♗f5 So Black studiously refrains from...c5. 9 c3 ♗e7 10 g4 ♗h4 11 ♗xh4 ♗xh4 12 f4 f5 13 exf6 ♗xf6 14 ♗d3 ♗xd3 15 ♖xd3 g6 16 ♗d2 ♖e7 17 ♖ae1 0-0∞ Delchev,A–Schlosser,P/National I, Besancon FRA 2003 White seems to be a little better but it is not at all easy to open up the position without his own King becoming weak.

4 h4!/? idiosyncratic play typical of Evgeny Sveshnikov 4...h6 5 g4 ♗h7!/? 6 e6 Thought to be good for White. 6...♖d6 Black ignores the displacement of his King, relying on ...e7–e5 for counterplay. 7 exf7+ ♗xf7 8 ♗c3 e5 9 ♖f3+ ♗f6 10 g5 hxg5? He had to keep the Kingside closed and seek central counterplay. (Black's position is tenable after both 10...e4 and 10...exd4) 11 hxg5 ♗e4 12 ♗xe4 dxe4 13 ♖b3+ ♗d5 14 ♖xh8+– Sveshnikov,E–Gagunashvili,M/Dubai 2003.

4...e6

4...♖b6 Karpov decides to avoid the dangers of 4...e6 5 g4, instead adopting a much quieter treatment. He was probably hoping to outplay his young opponent in a quiet middlegame rather than indulge in any kind of theoretical battle. 5 ♗f3 (Black snatched the pawn with 5 ♗d3 ♖xd4 6 ♗f3 ♖g4 in Holmsten,A–Minasian,A/Ubeda Open 2000) 5...e6 6 ♗e2 ♗e7 7 0-0 ♗g4 8 ♗a4 ♖c7 9 b3 b5!/? 10 ♗b2 ♗d7 11 c4 bxc4 12 bxc4 dxc4 13 ♗g5!/? Enterprising, but not necessarily the best. (Simply 13 ♗xc4 ♗d5 14 ♗d2 would maintain a nice edge for White.) 13...♗xe2 14 ♖xe2 Grischuk,A–Karpov,A/Linares ESP 2001.

4...a6



The ultimate deterrent? This is something like a high class waiting move with which Black keeps open the option of retreating his bishop to c8 and removes one of the potential dangers of a later ...c6–c5 by protecting the b5 square.

a) 5 ♕d3 ♕xd3 6 ♖xd3 e6 7 ♗ge2 c5 8 dxc5 ♖c6 9 ♖g3 ♗ge7 10 ♕g5 ♗f5 11 ♕xd8 ♗xg3 12 hxg3 ♖xd8 13 f4 ♕xc5 Black is very comfortable here. If this game had been played under normal tournament conditions I suspect that Karpov would have won, [Llobel Cortell,E–Karpov,A/Manises ESP 2001](#).

b) 5 ♕e3

b1) 5...h5!?N 6 ♗f3 e6 7 ♕d3 ♗e7 8 0-0 ♗d7 9 ♗e2 c5! 10 dxc5 ♕g4 11 ♗fd4 ♗xe5 12 b4 ♗xd3 13 cxd3 e5 14 ♗b3 d4 15 ♕d2 ♖d5 16 f4 A very murky position has arisen where Black needs to demonstrate light–squared superiority. 16...f6?! (To that end 16...e4! is correct: 17 dxe4 ♖xe4↑) 17 fxe5 fxe5 18 ♗a5 h4 19 h3 ♕f5∞ [Vlassov,N–Bologan,V/Edda Rapid, Reykjavic ISL 2003](#)

b2) 5...c5 Playing this straight away looks very interesting. 6 dxc5 e6 7 ♗f3 ♗d7 8 b4 Hanging on to his ill–gotten gains, but now Black develops powerful counterplay against the weakened queenside. 8...♕g4 9 ♖d4 ♕xf3 10 gxf3 ♗e7 11 f4 b6!/? [Wiersma,E–Grooten,H/Leeuwarder NED 2001](#).

c) 5 ♗ce2 With Black playing so slowly White also feels he can indulge in long–term strategic manoeuvres. 5...e6 6 ♗g3 ♕g6 7 h4 h6 8 ♗1e2 ♗e7 9 ♗f4 c5 10 ♗xg6 ♗xg6 11 ♕d3 cxd4 12 ♕xg6 fxg6 13 ♖g4 ♖d7 14 ♖xg6+ ♖f7 15 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 This endgame is better for Black, he has the better bishop and White has yet to recover the pawn on d4, [Shirov,A–Anand,V/ Leon ESP 2001](#).

4...a5!? a new move, utterly different to 4...a6, which completely floors Sebag. Black stakes out a claim on queenside space and denies White an attacking target (i.e. the bishop on f5) 5 ♕e3 a4 6 a3 ♖b6 7 ♖b1 ♖a5 8 g4 ♕d7 9 ♕g2 e6 10 ♗ge2 c5! 11 0-0 ♗c6 12 f4 h5 13 h3 hxg4 14 hxg4 cxd4 15 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 16 ♕xd4 ♕c5∞ [Sebag,M–Chiburdanidze,M/Elista RUS 2004](#), fascinating play.

5 g4

This line has never been more popular and hundreds of games were played at the top level during the last two years. White's play may seem somewhat anti–positional but it fits well into one of the main principles of modern chess: White should fight for the

initiative at any cost. Another explanation of the popularity of this variation is the fact Black is currently doing well in the Caro main lines with 3.Nc3 (let's say, in Smyslov's 4...Nd7 and the Classical 4...Bf5). The main experts in this line are A.Shirov, E. Sutovsky, I.Nataf (to name only a few) and among adherents of Black's position are GMs E.Bareev, A.Dreev, I.Khenkin and yours truly!

5...♟g6 6 ♘ge2

The "tabia" of the line. Now it's Black turn to choose a defensive system. After the text 7.h4 is a real threat as 7...h5 will be strongly met by 8 Nf4.

The premature 6 h4 leads White nowhere after 6...h5

6...♞e7

We took a look at this line last year when this defence was at the height of its popularity. Since then many interesting games have been played, and the line has proved its viability.

6...f6!? This old move is out of fashion nowadays but it's by no means bad. It fits in with the well known principle that a flank attack should be countered by action in the centre of the board.

a) 7 ♘f4

a1) 7...♟f7 8 ♖e2 ♞d7 9 exf6 ♗xf6 10 g5 ♗xd4 11 ♞xe6 ♟xe6 12 ♗xe6+ ♟e7 13 ♟e3 ♖e5 14 ♗g4 ♟c5 15 0-0-0 ♟xe3+ 16 fxe3 ♞e7? [Galdunts,S-Schulz,J/7th BayEM, Bad Wiessee GER 2003](#) Taking on e3 would have been both courageous and correct. (16...♗xe3+ 17 ♟b1 0-0-0∞)

a2) 7...fxe5!? Looks risky but is by no means bad. 8 ♞xg6 (8 ♞xe6 leads to a wild position, one which is acceptable to Black, [Wegerle,J-Yevseev,D/Cappelle la Grande FRA 2004.](#)) 8...hxg6 9 dxe5 ♞d7 10 ♟f4 The critical position for the evaluation of White's plan. Although Black's pawn structure on the K-side is exposed, in my opinion Black's chances are by no means worse. First of all, Black's Knights are not at all inferior to White's Bishop's pair since both Bishops are restricted by pawn chains. Also White can't really exploit the weakness of g6-pawn since Black can firmly protect it by playing...Ne7 and after completing his development (...Qc7, ... 0-0-0 to follow) Black can hope to obtain a comfortable blockade position. 10...♟b4 11 ♟d3 ♞e7 12 0-0 ♗c7 13 ♞e2 Sacrificing a pawn White tries to seize the initiative, [Antonsen,M-Kortschnoj,V/Copenhagen 1996.](#)

b) 7 h4! In my opinion, the best move. 7...fxe5 8 h5 ♟f7 (8...exd4? is a gross blunder in view of 9 hxg6 dxc3 10 ♖xh7! and White wins.) 9 dxe5 ♞d7 10 f4 White has managed to obtain a flexible pawn phalanx in the centre of the board and a considerable space advantage. However the position is not at all clear, since White lags behind in development after his many pawn moves. 10...♗b6 11 ♞d4! The only way to fight for an opening advantage, [Sax,G-Lauber,A/Gyula 1997.](#)

6...c5 This has been Black's main reply throughout the decades (6...Ne7 which is very popular now, was discovered only a few years ago). The appreciation of this move has changed many times – brilliant wins and severe losses have alternated with each other. But the line is alive, and only last year was enriched with many interesting

ideas. 7 h4! This straightforward move is the best in this position. Now Black has to decide how to save the Bishop. (7 ♕e3 is the alternative to the text but Black's task is not so difficult, 7...cxd4 8 ♖xd4 ♗b4 9 ♜d2 ♖d7 10 a3 ♜a5 11 ♜b1!? ♕xc3 12 bxc3 a6 13 ♜xb7 ♜xa3 [Kotronias,V–Kidambi,S/British Championship 2003](#).)

a) 7...cxd4 This line, which leads to wild complications, was popular in the Eighties, but I believe after this game it will struggle to find new adherents. 8 ♖xd4 h5 Now 9.Nf4 is impossible. 9 f4! (9 ♗b5+ ♖d7 10 f4! transposes.)

a1) Black has also tried 9...♜d7 but has failed to equalize: 10 f5 exf5 11 gxf5 ♕xf5 12 ♖xf5 ♜xf5 13 ♜xd5 ♖c6 14 ♗b5! ♖ge7 15 ♜e4 ♜c6 (Or 15...♜xe4+ 16 ♖xe4 ♖f5 17 ♗g5 ♗e7 18 0-0-0! and Black still has difficulties to solve) 16 ♗g5 0-0-0 17 ♕xc6 bxc6 18 0-0!? and White is better, [Grasso–Behl, 1995](#).

a2) 9...hxg4 10 ♗b5+ ♖d7 11 f5! The most consistent and dangerous continuation. (The humble 11 ♜xg4 ♖h6 12 ♜g2 ♜b6!? is OK for Black.) 11...♜xh4! (11...♕xf5 as was played in [Sax–Vadasz, Hungary 1985](#) is weak: 12 ♖xf5 exf5 13 ♜xd5 ♜c7 14 ♗f4 ♖e7 and now White should play 15 ♜d2 0-0-0 16 e6! and Black is in trouble.) 12 ♜f1! Officially theory considers this position as unclear, but I believe White is better here. It is of note that major Caro–Kann experts (including Karpov and Anand) always avoid this position with Black. 12...exf5 13 e6! The most precise move again. (After 13 ♗f4 a6! Black is OK) 13...fxe6 14 ♖xe6 ♜e7 15 ♜e2 The critical position of this line. White sacrifices 3 (!) pawns but obtains a dangerous initiative. First of all Black needs to parry the threats of 16.Nc7 and 16.Nd5, see [Nagel–Cuno](#) for the analysis.

b) 7...h6 8 f4! True to his style, Shirov chooses the most aggressive continuation. (8 ♕e3 is the old (but not bad!) main line.)

b1) After 8...♖c6 9 ♗g2! intending 10.f5 is strong, and it's very dangerous for Black to grab a pawn: 9...cxd4 (9...♗e7 or 10 0-0 cxd4 11 ♖xd4 ♕c5 12 ♗e3 ♖xd4 13 ♗xd4 ♕xc2 14 ♜d2! ♗xd4+ 15 ♜xd4 ♜xh4 16 ♖b5! and Black's position can hardly be defended) 10 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 11 ♜xd4 ♕xc2 12 f5! and White's attack is very strong

b2) 8...♗e7 9 ♗g2! The pawn sacrifice is a logical follow-up. (9 h5? ♗h4+ 10 ♖d2 ♗h7 is clearly in Black's favor.) 9...♗xh4+ 10 ♖f1 For a sacrificed pawn, White has obtained a huge development advantage (especially taking into consideration the fact Black will need one more move to return the Bishop). Black has to solve some extremely difficult tasks. 10...♗e7 11 f5! [Shirov,A–Nisipeanu,L/FIDE WCh Las Vegas 1999](#), an exciting game!

c) 7...h5 The main line. 8 ♖f4

c1) 8...♗h7!? Black keeps his strong Bishop and sacrifices a pawn, hoping to obtain a development advantage and exploit the weakness of White's centre. This is a very interesting idea and the previous perception of this position was that White held the advantage 9 ♖xh5 cxd4 10 ♖b5! Only by playing this move, can White hope for an opening advantage. 10...♖c6 11 ♖xd4 ♖xd4?! (11...♖xe5 deserves attention and although after 12 ♗f4 ♖c6 13 ♗b5 ♜c8 14 ♜e2 White has a development advantage and good attacking chances, the position is not clear at all.

11...♖ge7! A very recent, sensible improvement by Dreev. Black holds fire with his Queen, preferring to develop, 12 ♗g5 ♜a5+ 13 c3 ♖xd4 14 ♜xd4 ♖c6 [Fedorov,A–Dreev,A/Moscow 2003](#)) 12 ♜xd4 ♖e7 13 ♜a4+ ♖c6 14 ♗g5 ♜a5+?! The Queen exchange here is equal to resignation, [Shirov,A–Yermolinsky,A/Wijk aan Zee 1999](#).

(14...♖b6 was relatively better although after 15 0-0-0 ♖xf2 16 ♜h3! ♜c8 17 ♜c3! White is doing well)

c2) 8...♗c6!? Black allows White to destroy his pawn structure on the K-side, but in return creates pressure on White's centre. 9 ♗xg6 fxg6 10 ♗e2! (Other moves are also insufficient, for example: 10 gxf5? cxd4 11 ♗b5 ♜xh5

or 10 ♗e3? cxd4 11 ♗xd4 ♗h6! 12 gxf5 ♗f5 with a huge edge for Black.)

c2a) 10...♖b6!? An idea of German GM Igor Khehkin. Black steps up the pressure on White's centre. 11 ♗f4! Consistently played: White attacks Black's weaknesses without delay. 11...cxd4 12 ♗xg6!? True to his style Morozevich grabs the first opportunity to mix things up. Now vast complications arise. 12...♗b4+ 13 ♗e2 The critical position for evaluating Morozevich's idea, [Morozevich,A–Bareev,E/Sarajevo 2000](#).

c2b) 10...hxf4 11 ♗f4 is very dangerous for Black

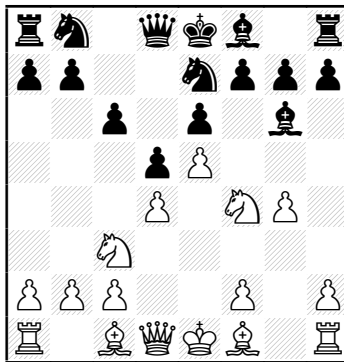
c2c) and 10...♗ge7 is also not too hot 11 ♗f4 cxd4 12 ♗h3! (12 ♗xe6?! ♖d7 13 ♗xf8 ♜xf8 is OK for Black.)

c2d) 10...cxd4 This move has a bad reputation, but Black has something in mind... 11 ♗xd4 Now the e6-pawn is hanging but Black finds a very unusual way to protect it! 11...♗d7!? An attempted improvement over (11...♗xd4 12 ♖xd4 ♖d7 13 ♗d3 ♗e7 14 ♗g5 hxg4 15 0-0-0 ♗f5 16 ♖xg4 with a huge edge for White, Mannion–Campbell, Largs 1998.) 12 ♗h3 ♖b6 13 c3? After this humble move, Black's opening idea is justified. (The position of Black's King is very unsafe, therefore the Knight sacrifice – 13 ♗xe6! suggests itself. I analyzed this line quite a while and I can't see a good way for Black to defend.) 13...♗xd4 14 cxd4 hxg4 15 ♖xg4 ♗e7 16 0-0 ♗f5 Black has a comfortable blockade, and he is ready to exploit White's weaknesses on the K-side, [Grischuk,A–Ehlvest,J/New Delhi 2000](#).

6...♗e7 GM Tony Miles is the main adherent of this line at the top level. This move looks strange because the Knight on g8 now has no good square, but Black has something in mind. He plans to play 7...Nd7 and then to undermine White's pawn chain by playing...h7–h5. After ...h7–h5 White's usual reply is Nf4 destroying Black's pawn structure on the K-side, but then it's not so dangerous for Black since he can protect his g6-pawn by playing ...Nf8. But in my opinion, this plan looks pretentious and White can obtain better chances (of course, that is, if he plays accurately!) 7 ♗e3 The most logical continuation. White prepares to castle on the Q-side, and then take action on the K-side (f2–f4–f5). 7...♗d7 8 ♖d2 h5 9 ♗f4 hxg4 10 ♗xg6 fxg6 The critical position of the line. 11 ♗e2! ♗f8 12 0-0-0 [Nataf,I–Andersson,F/Stockholm 2000](#).

6...h5!? is very rare indeed and Black soon has what seems to be a disgusting position. However, appearances are deceptive! 7 ♗f4 ♖h4 8 ♗xg6 fxg6 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 Thought-provoking, [Sprenger,W–Pranjal,P/41st WJun, Goa IND 2002](#).

7 ♗f4



Here 7 h4 is premature again: 7...h5 8 ♖f4 hxg4 The bishop on g6 is protected – that's the idea behind 6...Ne7 9 ♗xg6 ♗xg6 10 h5 c5 11 ♖xg4 cxd4 9 f4!? Virtually wins a piece by force but Black gets a massive centre. 7...c5 8 ♗g3 cxd4 9 ♗b5 ♗ec6 10 f5 ♗c5 11 ♗d6+! ♗xd6 12 exd6 ♖xd6 13 ♗g2 f6 14 fxg6 hxg6 15 0-0 Anand,V–Karpov,A/GMA, Wijk aan Zee NED 2003.

7...c5 8 h4

This move used to be played automatically but early in 2000 Shirov discovered that 8 dxc5!? is a very interesting alternative and it quickly became very fashionable. This simple move contains more than a drop of poison, White doesn't give up on the idea of Bishop-hunting (8.h4), he just delays it for a move.

- a) This game may well persuade Black to return to the more popular 8...♗ec6 9 h4 ♖c7!?
- a1) The hasty 10 h5 is not good: 10...♖xc5+ 11 ♗c3 (11 ♗e2 ♗e4 12 ♖h3 h6!) 11...♗e4 and if 12 f3 then 12...♗xc2!
- a2) 10 ♗g2 10...♖xc5+ 11 ♗ce2 ♗a6! An important novelty. 12 h5 ♗e4 13 f3 0-0-0! [Shirov,A–Bareev,E/Montecatini Terme 2000](#).
- b) 8...♗d7 9 h4 ♗xe5 10 ♗g2 (10 ♗b5+ ♗7c6 11 ♖e2 a6! and Black successfully solves all his opening problems.)
- b1) Sergei Shipov subsequently suggested the sharp 10...d4!? 11 ♗ce2 (11 h5 dxc3) 11...♗7c6 after which 12 h5 (12 ♗xc6+ ♗xc6 13 h5 ♗e4 is good for Black) 12...♗xc2 13 ♖xc2 d3 with good counterplay.
- b2) 10...h5 A fairly passive treatment by Karpov, could he do better? 11 ♖e2 ♗7c6 (11...♗xg4 12 ♗b5 ♖d7 13 ♗d6+ ♗d8 14 c4 with a growing initiative.) 12 ♗xg6 ♗xg6 13 ♗g5! Kasparov unleashes his home cooking, the text improving Shirov – Karpov, Monaco 2000. (In that game White had played 13 ♗xd5 but had nothing special after 13...♗xc5 14 ♗g5 ♗ge7 and in complications Black managed to maintain the balance.) 13...♗e7 14 gxh5 [Kasparov,G–Karpov,A/Linares ESP 2001](#). And White won very convincingly over his long time arch-rival.

8...cxd4 9 ♗b5 ♗ec6 10 h5 ♗e4 11 f3

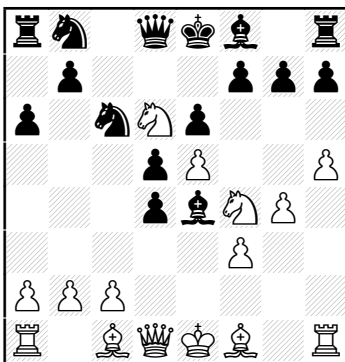
The Bishop is trapped but Black takes all White's central pawns in return.

11...a6!?

Discussion of the merits of 11 ...a6!? continues. White still has not found anything special after Anand's 13 ...g5!?

11...♙xf3 12 ♖xf3 ♜xe5 13 ♗g3 (13 ♗f2!? ♜xg4 14 ♗e2 led to a quick White crush in [Agdestein,S–Ostenstad,B/ch–NOR, Roros NOR 2002](#)) 13...♞bc6 The knight on b5 is in trouble now so White has to do something. 14 ♞d3 f6 15 ♞f4 This Knight manoeuvre slightly loosens Black's position. 15...♙f7 16 c3 (16 g5!? deserved attention, according to Alexey Fedorov.) 16...dxc3 17 bxc3 ♞c8 An attempt to improve on Black's previous play. (17...d4 [Fedorov,A–Asrian,K/Sankt Peterburg 1997](#).) 18 ♙h3 Preparing g4–g5. (The immediate 18 g5!? deserves attention as well.) 18...♗a5 Now Black's idea is clear: to protect the weak e6–square with a Knight on d8, and then try to exploit White's weaknesses on the queenside. White needs to play very energetically to refute this plan. 19 g5! [Sutovsky,E–Podgaets,M/Koszalin \(Poland\) 1998](#).

12 ♞d6+



12 fxe4 Although White won this game, this novelty doesn't look very promising. By the way, I would like to say the following thing. Many players during their opening preparation study only games with a positive result, (for example, if somebody plays the Caro–Kann with Black, he studies only Black's wins). In my opinion, this is a serious mistake. Sometimes lost games contain very interesting opening ideas, and the outcome of the game may depend on a later mistake. So my advice to you is: NEVER ignore lost games. 12...axb5 13 exd5 exd5 Of course, Black's pawns look ugly, but other factors are more important. White's pawns are weak as well, and his King can't feel safe on the kingside (Pawns can't move backwards!) or on the queenside due to the open a–file. Besides one of Black's "ugly" pawns is an extra pawn, and White needs some tempi to win it back.

a) One of the main experts in this line, French GM Igor Nataf, introduced a very interesting idea – 14 h6!? Nataf–Volzhin, Stockholm 2000. I suffered a terrible defeat after 14...g6?! 15 ♙g2 ♙b4+ 16 ♙d2! ♙xd2+ 17 ♗xd2 0-0 18 ♞xd5 ♞d7 19 0-0 ♞dxc5 20 g5! Black's position is very difficult in view of the poor position of his King.

- b) Of course if 14 ♖xb5?? ♗a5+
- c) 14 ♗e2 does not look very promising: 14...♙b4+ 15 ♖f2 0-0 16 ♗xb5 ♗e8 (16...♗a5 17 ♗e2 ♖d7 18 e6 ♖de5) 17 ♗xd5 ♖xe5 with unclear play, according to Emil Sutovsky.
- d) 14 ♙g2 14...♙b4+ 15 ♖f1 (15 c3? dxc3 16 0-0 was bad for White, for example: 16...♙c5+ 17 ♖h2 0-0 18 bxc3 ♗h4+ 19 ♙h3 ♖xe5 winning) 15...♖xe5 16 ♖xd5 ♙d6?! (It was better to develop the Knight with 16...♖bc6 protecting both the Bishop and the pawn on d4 (by the way, the Knight doesn't move till the very end of the game!). I definitely prefer Black here, as he has very strong Knights in the centre and White's King is exposed. It's important that White's attempt to win a piece by 17 ♗e2 0-0 18 ♖xb4 could be strongly met by 18...♗f6+! 19 ♖g1 ♖xb4 with a big advantage.) 17 h6 g6 18 ♗xd4 0-0 Still well-known theory!
- d1) 19 g5?! A novelty but of rather dubious merits. 19...♖bd7! [Salmensuu,O-Volzhin,A/Gausdal 2000](#). (19...♖bc6 20 ♗b6 ♗c8 21 ♖f6+ ♖h8 22 ♗f2 and Black's development advantage does not look too important, since he has to take care of his King, for example: 22...♖b4 23 ♙e4 ♗c4+ 24 ♖g2 ♖g4 25 ♗f3 ♖e5 26 ♗f1 with a clear advantage.)
- d2) 19 ♗b6?! White's attempt to reach an endgame is very logical not only because he has a pair of Bishops, but also because his King is too exposed but this was probably not the best decision at this precise moment. 19...♗xb6 20 ♖xb6 ♗a6 21 ♙e3 ♖xg4 22 ♙g1 Currently one can draw the following conclusion: Black is doing well in this line. But when I asked GM Emil Sutovsky if this line is dead for White, he just smiled and said: "We shall see...". So there is no doubt that great battles in this line still lie ahead... [Sutovsky,E-Christiansen,L/Essen 1999](#).

12...♙xd6 13 exd6 g5

This is Anand's improvement. In a previous game all Black's problems were based on the fact that the White pieces could be comfortably and strongly placed on very good central squares like e4 or f5. Now Black tries to retain and fortify his pawn mass in a different way.

Black shouldn't spend time taking the pawn on d6: 13...♗xd6?! as after 14 ♙g2!? f5 15 0-0 0-0 16 fxe4 dxe4 17 c3! White has excellent chances to demolish Black's strong pawn centre: 17...d3 18 ♗b3 d2 19 ♙xd2 ♗xd2 20 ♖xe6!? (20 ♗xe6+ followed by Rf2 and gxf5 is also good enough.) 20...♖a5 21 ♗d1 with a huge advantage.

13...e5 14 fxe4! (After 14 ♖h3?! f5! 15 fxe4 fxe4 Black's central pawn mass looks very attractive and solid

the position is far from clear.) 14...dxe4 Taking the pawn, not the Knight! (14...exf4?! seems to be in White's favour: 15 exd5 ♗a5+ 16 ♖f2 ♗xd5 17 ♙g2 ♗xd6 18 ♗e1+ ♖f8 19 ♗f3 followed by Bf4 and Black is in trouble: the pair of Bishops are very strong plus the Black King has not castled so the Rook on h8 cannot be developed.) 15 ♖e2 [Nataf,I-Atalik,S/Capelle la Grande 1999](#).

14 ♖h3

Of course not 14 hxg6? ♙xg6 and the Bishop is alive.

14...h6 15 fxe4 dxe4 16 ♖g2 f5 17 0-0 0-0

Probably the critical position for an assessment of Black's idea. It looks like White has only one way to destroy Black's pawn centre – by giving a piece back. The question is whether White will be able to find the appropriate place and time.

18 gxf5!?

18 c3? Logical: White is trying to undermine Black's pawn centre, and he also gets the possibility of a Queen sortie to b3, but it was not easy to foresee that this greatly helps Black's development. 18...♖xd6 19 gxf5 (In case of 19 ♗e3 ♗d7 20 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 21 ♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 22 cxd4 ♗b6 it is White who has problems in this endgame due to his very bad minor pieces but nevertheless this was probably the best option.) 19...exf5 20 ♖b3+ [Topalov, V–Anand, V/Linares 1999](#)– A brilliant victory by Vishy Anand. (20 ♗e3 ♗d7 21 cxd4 ♗b6 22 ♖b3+ ♗d5 was fine for Black.)

18...exf5 19 ♗xe4!?

A new try which does not bring any advantage.

The attempt to change the move order does not work: 19 ♗xg5?! hxg5 20 ♗xe4 ♖xd6! 21 ♗g2 g4 and 22 ♖xf5 is bad: 22...gxh3 23 ♖g4+ ♗h8 24 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 25 ♖f1 ♖g7 keeping a material advantage, according to Evgeny Solozhenkin.

19...fxe4 20 ♗xg5

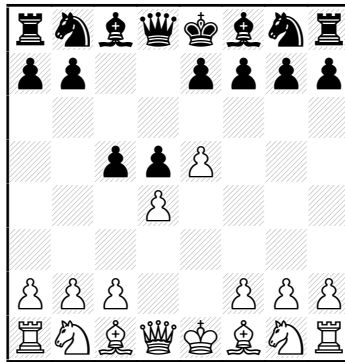
[Nataf, I–Solozhenkin, E/France 1999](#).

Caro-Kann – Advance– 3...c5 & 3...Na6

[B12]

Last updated: 12/03/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5



This line is not as well investigated as the main lines arising after 3...Bf5 and it's good way to avoid such mountains of theory. This is actually a gambit line.

The move 3...Na6 is something that I wouldn't recommend for Black unless he can see his opponent foaming at the mouth. The best that Black can hope for is to create a blocked position in which he's got less space, not the most attractive of prospects unless your opponent then impales himself on the ramparts.

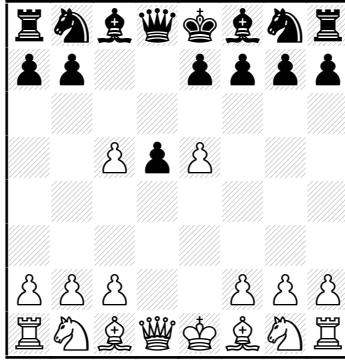
a) Kotronias suggested 4 Nd2, presumably trying to save the tempo expended on 4 c3, but then 4...Qf5 threatens 5 ...Nb4. (he wanted to meet 4...Nc7 with 5 Qd3 and 4...g6 could be answered by 5 Ne2)

b) 4 c3 Nunn's favourite move, which certainly seems to give Black some problems. White wants to do some clever tricks with his knights. 4...Nc7 (4...Qf5 5 Ne2 e6 6 Nf4! The advantage of putting the knight on this square is that once Black's bishop is on g6 he will find it difficult to move his h-pawn. And with Black's pieces so passively placed he cannot distract White from his coming g2-g4 plan with any kind of counterattack. 6...Ne7 7 Nd2 Nc7 8 g4! Qg6 9 h4 f6 An unfortunate necessity. 10 Nxc6 hxc6 11 Nf3 Nunn,J-Nikolac,J/Germany 1984.

For 4...g6 see Nunn – Arkell) 5 Ne2 Patent John Nunn. (5 Qd3 has been more popular, but there is no evidence that it is any more effective.) 5...g6 6 Ng3 Nh6 7 Nd2 Qg4 8 f3

♙d7 9 f4 ♘e6 (Black is finding it difficult to stem the flow of White pawns – 9... ♗f5 is met by 10 ♖xf5 ♙xf5 11 g4) 10 ♗f3 ♗g7 11 h3 ♗hf5 12 ♖xf5 ♙xf5 13 g4 Nunn,J–Arkell,K/London (England) 1990.

4 dxc5



4 c3 is harmless, for example: 4... ♗c6 5 ♙e3 cxd4 6 cxd4 ♙f5 7 ♗c3 e6 and the position is similar to the French but Black has an active light-squared Bishop.

4 c4!? Variety is the spice of life! This strange move appears well playable: 4... ♗c6 5 cxd5 ♗xd5 6 ♗c3 ♗xd4 7 ♙e3 ♗b4 8 a3 ♗a5 9 ♙b5 e6 10 ♙xc6+ bxc6 11 ♗a4 ♗b6 12 b4 ♗a6 13 ♗xa6 ♙xa6∞ Topalovic,Z–Mikhalchishin,A/GM, Varazdin CRO 2003.

4... ♗c6

4...e6 The latest development. In my previous updates I told you that Black can begin with either 4...Nc6 or 4...e6 since both moves lead to the same positions. But recently Black has been trying to omit an early ...Nc6 completely. The main adherent of this line at GM level is the German Rustem Dautov.

a) 5 ♗g4 The idea behind this move is to prevent normal development of Black's K-side.

5...h5!? A natural move but the weakening of the K-side is an obvious drawback.

a1) White has also tried 6 ♗f4 ♙xc5 7 ♙d3 ♗b6 8 c3!? g5 9 ♗d2 This involves White in some interesting gambit play, but there was a greedy alternative. (Simply 9 ♗xg5 looks interesting – after 9... ♙xf2+ 10 ♖f1 I don't see a follow-up for Black and White is threatening Qg7.) 9... ♗c6 10 ♗e2 ♗h6 11 ♗f3 Nunn,J–Breder,D/Hamburg GER 2001.

a2) 6 ♙b5+ 6... ♙d7 7 ♙xd7+ ♗xd7 (7... ♗xd7 was also possible, with level chances after 8 ♗e2 ♙xc5 9 ♗f3 ♗c6 10 0-0 ♗ge7 11 ♗bd2 ♗f5) 8 ♗e2 ♙xc5 9 ♗f3 ♗e7 (After the game GM Dautov pointed out he could have obtained a good position by playing 9... ♗a5+!? for example: 10 c3 ♗a6! 11 ♗xa6 bxa6 12 ♗bd2 ♗e7 13 ♗b3 ♙b6 and it's not clear how White can hold the e5-pawn. 14 ♙f4 ♗g6 15 g3 ♙c7) 10 0-0 ♗c7 11 c3 a6 12 ♗e1 ♗c8 13 ♙g5 ♗g6 14 ♗bd2 0-0 Kindermann,S–Dautov,R/Bad Homburg 1997. Both sides have completed development and in my opinion the position is equal. Of course the pawn on h5 looks ugly but I can't see how White can exploit this.

b) 5 ♗e3 5...♖h6!?

b1) 6 c3 ♖f5 7 ♗d4 ♗d7! An important novelty. (Previously Black had played 7...♖xd4) 8 ♖f3 ♖c6 9 ♗d2!? (9 ♗d3 is not good in view of the typical 9...♖fxd4 10 cxd4 b6!) 9...f6! (White is well prepared for the typical pawn sacrifice ...b6: 9...♖fxd4 10 cxd4 b6 11 b4! or 9...♖xd4 10 cxd4 b6 11 cxb6 ♗xb6 12 ♖c3 and in both cases Black hardly has enough for the pawn.) 10 exf6 gxf6 11 ♗b5 ♗e7! 12 0-0?! After this inaccuracy Black obtains a clear edge, [Smirnov,P–Prizant,J/Russia 2000](#). (12 b4 should be played, and after 12...0-0 13 0-0 ♗g8 a very complicated position arises where both sides have chances, but personally I would prefer to play Black.)

b2) 6 ♖f3!? This move seems to be superior to 6...♖d7 Dautov's improvement. (Previously he had tried 6...♖f5 but failed to equalise.) 7 ♗xh6! An important novelty. 7...gxh6 8 c4! Now this break is much more to the point. 8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♖xc5 10 ♗e2! (After a Queen swap Black has no problems at all: 10 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 11 ♖c3 ♗g7 12 0-0-0+ ♖e7 with comfortable equality.) 10...a6 11 b4?! This move seems to be too ambitious. (The natural 11 0-0 is worth considering, for example: 11...b5 12 ♗d1 ♗c7 13 ♗d3 ♖xd3 14 ♗xd3 ♗b7 15 ♖c3 ♗g7 16 ♖e4 and White retains some pressure.) 11...♖d7 12 a3 a5! Immediately exploiting the weakening of White's Q-side. 13 ♖c3! A brave and correct decision. White fights for the initiative at any cost, [Sutovsky,E–Dautov,R/Essen 2000](#). (After the primitive 13 b5 Black has a comfortable blockade on the dark squares.)

4...♖h6!? deserves consideration.

5 ♗b5

Practice proves this move is the only way to fight for opening advantage. The alternatives are:

Paul Motwani chose 5 ♖f3 in the rapid encounter P. Motwani–J.Bourne at the Staffordshire Millennium Blitz Tournament on July 15, and the game continued 5...e6 (better 5...♗g4! and Black has good play.) 6 a3!? ♗xc5 7 b4 ♗b6 8 b5 ♖a5 (8...♖xe5? 9 ♖xe5 ♗f6 10 f4 wins for White) 9 ♗d3 ♖e7 10 0-0 ♗d7 (10...0-0? allows the "Greek gift" sacrifice 11 ♗xh7+! intending 11...♖xh7 12 ♖g5+ ♖g8 13 ♗h5 with a winning attack for White) 11 ♗e2 ♗c8 12 ♖bd2 ♗c7 13 a4 ♖g6 14 g3 ♖c4? 15 ♗xc4! dxc4 16 ♗a3 Preventing Black from legally castling, and leaving him with no proper answer to White's threats of Bd6 or Ne4–d6+

5 ♗f4!? has a certain popularity, but recently Black found the correct way: 5...e6 6 ♖d2 ♖ge7! (6...♗xc5 is inferior since after 7 ♖b3 ♗b6 8 ♗g4! White seizes the initiative.) 7 ♖gf3 ♖g6 8 ♗g3 ♗xc5 9 ♖b3 ♗b6 10 ♗d3 0-0 Black has successfully completed his development and in this French-like position his chances are by no means bad.

5...e6

This is nowadays the main line.

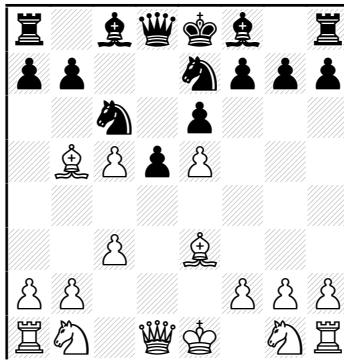
5...♗a5+?! This old move was convincingly refuted in this game: 6 ♖c3 e6 7 ♗e3 ♖ge7 8 ♖f3 ♖f5 9 a3! I think this move is the refutation of this line. At least I can't say where Black could improve his play. 9...♖xe3 10 fxe3 ♗c7 11 e4! [Shabalov,A–Arkell,K/London 1991](#).

6 ♖e3

This natural move is one of White's main weapons.

6 ♜g4!? is also interesting

6...♗ge7 7 c3



The only attempt to fight for an opening advantage.

7 ♗f3 is harmless: 7...♗f5! (7...♗d7 is also good: 8 0-0 ♗xe5 9 ♗xe5 ♗xb5 10 ♜h5 ♗g6 11 c4 ♗xc4 12 ♗xc4 dxc4 13 ♗a3 ♜d5! Black is on top, [Tagnon,N–Pert,R/12th Monarch Assurance, Port Erin IOM 2003](#)) 8 ♗d4 ♗fxd4 9 ♜xd4 Blatny–Hansen, Baguio City 1987, and now the simple 9...♜a5+! (instead of 9...a5 10 c3 ♗e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♗xc6 bxc6 13 b4 with a healthy extra pawn for White.) 10 ♗c3 ♜xb5! 11 ♗xb5 ♗xd4 12 ♗fxd4 (12 ♗bxd4 ♗xc5 secured Black good chances.) 12...♗xc5 13 ♗c7+? ♗d7 14 ♗xa8 ♗xd4 is bad for White as the Knight on a8 is trapped.

7...♗d7

(Threatening 8...Nxe5).

8 ♗xc6

In Xie Jun–Lalic, Erevan 1996 White ignored the above mentioned threat and played 8 ♗f3 ♗xe5 9 ♗xe5 ♗xb5 10 ♗a3 but after 10...♗d7 11 ♜b3 ♗c6! 12 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 Black had everything in order. The game continued: 13 0-0-0?! A very dubious decision. (13 0-0 was more safe.) 13...♗e7 14 h4 0-0 15 h5 b6 16 h6 g6 17 cxb6 axb6 18 ♗c2 ♗c5 19 c4 d4 20 ♗b1 e5! and Black was clearly better.

8...♗xc6 9 f4!?

9 ♗f3 ♜c7 10 ♗d4 White has firmly protected his extra pawn and that's why for decades this position was thought to be insufficient for Black. But matters are not so clear as this game proves. 10...♗xd4 11 cxd4 b6! 12 cxb6 ♜xb6 13 ♜b3 ♜a6! The critical

position: [Kaminski,M–Timoshchenko,G/Yerevan \(ol\) 1996](#). Obviously Black has tremendous compensation for the sacrificed pawn: he has a strong pair of bishops, open files on the Q–side and a considerable development advantage as White needs many tempi to evacuate his king from the centre of the board.

The immediate 9 ♕d4?! is weaker since after 9... ♖xd4 10 cxd4 b6 11 cxb6 (11 b4? a5 is just bad for White.) 11... ♗xb6 in comparison with the game [Kaminski–Timoshchenko](#) Black just has an extra tempo. Now Black's initiative progresses without hindrance.

9...g5!

The only way to obtain counterplay.

10 ♖f3

White completes his development hoping to exploit Black's weaknesses on the K–side. This move was thought to be a refutation of the whole line, but the novelty introduced by GM Igor Khenkin, the leading expert in this line, made White forget this move once and for all.

After this game White switched to 10 fxg5!? h6!? deserves certain attention. In [Schroeder–Arkell, Hastings 1999](#) Black obtained good prospects after (10... ♖xe5 11 ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 12 ♗xf3 ♕g7 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♖d2 ♕b5) The critical position for the evaluation of this line. For the sacrificed pawn Black obtained a strong pawn centre and bishop pair. The question is whether this is worth a pawn.)

a) 11 ♖f3 hxg5 (11... ♗c7!?) 12 ♕xg5 ♕e7 13 ♕e3 ♕h4+ 14 ♖d2 ♗c7 15 ♗e2 ♖xe5 16 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 17 ♖a3 ♕g5 18 ♕xg5 ♗xg5+ 19 ♖c2 ♗g6+ 20 ♖d2 ♗c8 This line needs further practical tests.

b) after 11 gxh6 11... ♕xh6 In return for two sacrificed pawns, Black now has a very dangerous lead in development and open lines for attacking on the kingside. 12 ♗e2 ♗h4+! 13 ♖f1 (13 g3? ♗e4 or 13 ♗f2? ♕xe3 wins material for Black, and 13 ♕f2 ♗g5 is also highly unpleasant for White.) 13... ♕xe3 14 ♗xe3 ♖xe5!! [Greet,A–Arkell,K/British Championship, Somerset 2000](#).

10...gxf4 11 ♕xf4 ♕xc5 12 ♖bd2 ♗b6 13 ♖b3 ♕f2+ 14 ♖e2

Black has to win the pawn back but White is threatening to seize the initiative on the K–side (Rf1, Ng5 etc) so Black should try to create threats against White's King first.

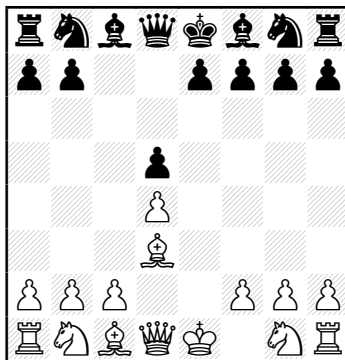
14...♖a5!

[David,A–Khenkin,I/Geneva 1996](#).

Caro-Kann – Exchange Variation [B13]

Last updated: 10/07/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♖d3



Larsen has tried delaying this move, evidently unconcerned that theory says he must prevent ...♗c8–f5:

4 c3 ♗c6 (4... ♗f5 5 ♗b3!? seizes the initiative.) 5 ♗f4!? ♗f5 6 ♗d3 ♗g6 7 ♗f3 e6 8 0-0 ♗d6 9 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 10 ♗xg6 hxg6 11 ♗bd2 led to a tough struggle in [Larsen,B–Seirawan,Y/Las Palmas \(Spain\) 1981](#).

4 ♗f3 ♗c6 5 ♗f4!? at first sight looks a little dry, but White delays c3 in order to play 5... ♗b6 6 ♗c3!, when the threat of ♗b5 is awkward. 5... ♗g4 6 c3 ♗xf3 7 ♗xf3 e6 8 ♗d2 ♗d6 9 ♗g3 ♗ge7 10 ♗d3 0-0 11 0-0-0 b5∞ [Sveshnikov,E–Dreev,A/Tallinn EST 2004](#).

4...♗c6

4...g6 5 c3 ♗g7 6 ♗f4 In my opinion this move is inferior to Morozevich's 6.Nf3 (see later) since it's premature to determine the position of White's dark-square Bishop. 6...♗c6 7 ♗e2?! This move is the source of White's further troubles. (The natural 7 ♗f3 should be undoubtedly preferred.) 7...♗f6 8 ♗g3 I don't like White's set-up as the Knight has no prospects at all here. 8...0-0 9 0-0 ♗d7! Black finds a very good plan (e7–e5). 10 ♗d2 (10 ♗d2 e5! 11 dxe5 ♗dxe5 12 ♗b3 d4 and in the open position Black's pieces are more active, for example: 13 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 14 cxd4 ♗xd4 and Black wins the b2-pawn.) 10...e5 11 ♗h6 e4! 12 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 13 ♗c2 f5 Black can be perfectly satisfied with the results of the opening fight: he has a clear edge due to his

space advantage and the possibility of a K-side attack, [Uritzky,M-
Alterman,B/Israel 1999](#).

5 c3

This is the initial position of the Exchange Variation. The pawn structure arising in this line dictates the plans for both sides. White prepares to occupy the outpost on e5 followed by a K-side attack, and Black, for his part, prepares a minority attack on the Q-side. By the way, a similar pawn structure (with reversed colors) and similar plans often occurs in the Exchange Variation of the QGD.

5...♟f6

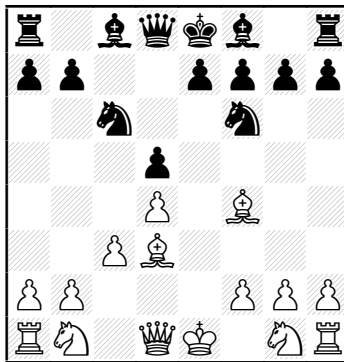
5...♞c7!? An interesting attempt to prevent 6 Bf4. This move is played rather seldom but certainly it deserves more attention. 6 ♘g5 (Another idea is to insist on developing the dark-squared bishop to the f4-square: 6 ♞e2 but the obvious drawback of this move is that the Knight is misplaced here and doesn't control the important e5-square. In my opinion the following method is good for Black: 6...♘g4! 7 f3 ♘d7 8 ♘f4 e5!? 9 dxe5 ♞xe5) 6...♟f6 7 ♞d2 ♘g4 8 ♞gf3 e6 9 ♘h4 ♘d6 10 ♘g3 ♘h5! We have already seen this manoeuvre before, here it's sound as well. 11 ♘xd6 ♞xd6 [Illescas Cordoba,M-Anand,V/Linares 1994](#).

5...g6 This line leads to more complicated play. As we already know, the most likely White plan is K-side activity, but after the flank development of Black's Bishop White's chances for a K-side attack are minimal. Moreover, sometimes Black tries to seize the initiative here by exchanging light-squared bishops on the f5-square hoping to obtain pressure on the g-file. The drawback of this plan is that Black's bishop is restricted by White's pawn chain (d4-c3-b2) and cannot support his minority attack on the Q-side. 6 ♞f3 (6 ♘f4 ♘g7 7 ♞f3 ♞f6 8 ♞bd2 0-0 9 0-0 ♞h5 10 ♘g5?! Planless play by White but typical of weaker players who have no real plan. With a quick ...f7-f6, Black soon exploits the unfortunate position of this bishop: 10...♞c7 11 ♞e1 ♞h8 12 ♞e2 f6 13 ♘e3 e5! [Mahboobi,S-Rajadharshini,M/Tehran IRI 2004](#), Black's overall plan is working perfectly. 6 h3 ♞h6 7 ♞f3 ♘f5 8 0-0 ♘xd3 9 ♞xd3 ♞f5 10 ♘f4 ♘g7 11 ♞bd2 0-0 12 ♞fe1 ♞a5 13 ♞e5 ♞c8 14 ♞e2 a6 15 ♞ae1 Easy chess by White who has almost sauntered her pieces to good squares. 15...♞e8 16 g4 ♞d6 17 ♞g3 b5 18 ♞xg6! BANG – here's the sting! [Dolzhikova,K-Gutsko,A/ALushta UKR 2004](#)) 6...♘g7

a) I played this line once with Black, Neverov-Volzhin, Cairo 1999. The game continued: 7 0-0 ♞f6 8 ♞e1 0-0 9 ♘f4 ♘f5 10 ♘xf5 gxf5 11 ♞e5! e6 (11...♞e4 is senseless in view of 12 f3) 12 ♘g5! The correct plan: in this pawn structure the Knights are better than the Bishop. 12...♞c7 13 ♘xf6 ♘xf6 14 ♞d3 ♞ab8 and here draw was agreed although White is slightly better after 15 ♞d2

b) 7 h3 7...♞h6 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♞e1 ♞f5 10 ♘f4 f6 11 ♞bd2 ♞e8 12 ♞b3 e5! Black can't delay this move, otherwise 13.c3-c4 is unpleasant, [Morozevich,A-Adianto,U/ Amsterdam 1996](#). (12...♞h8 13 c4 with a clear edge.)

6 ♘f4



The main line.

Recently White has begun to deviate from this main line by playing 6 ♖g5!? ♜e4!? is a very interesting alternative to the text. White can win a pawn: (6... ♖g4 7 ♜b3 ♜d7! 8 ♜d2 e6 9 ♜gf3 [Rausis,I–Berg,K/Gausdal \(Norway\) 1993](#) 6...e6 7 ♜f3 ♖e7 8 0-0 ♜c7 9 ♜bd2 [Rausis,I–Bruneel,I/Lyons 1993](#) 6...g6 7 ♖xf6 exf6 8 ♜f3 ♖e6 9 ♜e2 brought pressure to bear on d5 in [Bhend,E–Ciric,D/Zurich 1990](#)) 7 ♖h4 (7 ♖xe4 dxe4 8 d5 ♜e5 9 ♜a4+, as in [Weenink,H–Gudju,I/The Hague 1931](#), is a dangerous pawn snatch) 6 h3 is the old move. It prevents Bishop's sortie to g4 but allows 6...e5 and after 7 dxe5 ♜xe5 Black has good play: development advantage and active position of his minor pieces are ample compensation for the weakness of the isolated d5–pawn.

6... ♖g4 7 ♜b3 ♜d7

7... ♜a5 was played in the famous game Fischer–Petrosian, Belgrade 1970. This game is a model one for White: 8 ♜a4+ ♖d7 9 ♜c2 e6 10 ♜f3 ♜b6 11 a4! A very strong move which prevents 11...Bb5 exchanging the bad d7–Bishop for its strong counterpart. 7... ♜c8!? Another good possibility for Black. In comparison with 7...Qd7 this move has its merits and drawbacks. Now Black can't exchange dark–squared Bishops by playing ...Bd6, on the other hand now Black is not forced to exchange his light–squared Bishop with White's Knight on f3 (Ne5 is no longer threatened). 8 ♜d2 e6 9 ♜gf3 ♖e7 10 0-0 ♖h5! This manoeuvre (Bg4–h5–g6) is typical for this line, Black's Bishop has no better role than to exchange off its counterpart. 11 ♜e5 ♜xe5 12 ♖xe5 0-0 The critical position of this line, [Upton,T–Hracek,Z/Pula 1997](#).

8 ♜d2 e6 9 ♜gf3 ♖xf3 10 ♜xf3 ♖d6 11 ♖g3!?

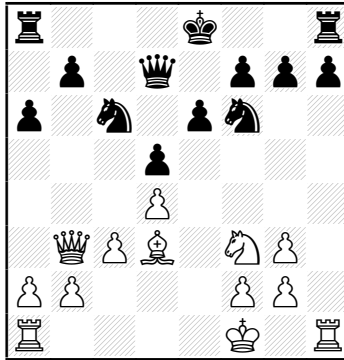
This humble move is indeed a very interesting novelty which poses serious problems for Black.

11 ♖xd6 ♜xd6 is the usual continuation but in numerous games Black successfully solved his opening problems.

11... ♖xg3

I don't like this move since the opening of the h-file gives White additional possibilities. 11...0-0 deserves attention although after 12 ♖c2! ♜ac8 13 ♖e2 (intending 14.Ne5) White has a small but steady advantage.

12 hxg3 a6 13 ♔f1!



The correct approach: White needn't castle since his Rook on h1 is already developed!

13...♖c7 14 ♜e1

Short,N–Ehlvest,J/Tallinn/Paernu 1998.

Caro-Kann – Panov Attack– 5...Nc6

[B13]

Last updated: 23/09/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4

The Panov-Botvinnik Attack is one of White's most threatening systems against Black's Caro-Kann Defence.

4...♟f6 5 ♟c3

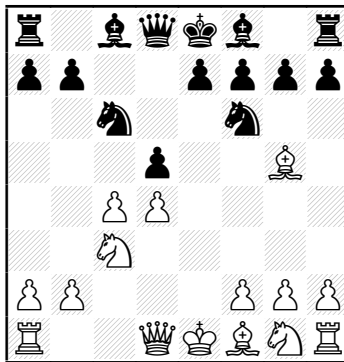
In the so-called Gundaram Variation with 5 c5, Black's most challenging line is 5...b6 (both 5...e6 6 b4 ♟e7 7 ♟f3 0-0 8 ♟d3 b6 9 ♟b2 (Korman,U-Svensson,C/Swedish Corr. Team Ch., 1976) and 5...g6 6 ♟c3 ♟g7 7 ♟b5+ ♟c6 8 ♟ge2 (Mariotti,S-Meduna,E/Biel 1982) seem to leave White with pressure) 6 b4 a5 7 b5 bxc5 8 dxc5 e6!? (8...e5) 9 c6 ♟e4 Frey,W-Habermann,A/corr FRG-ch 1981

5...♟c6

In recent years this has been adopted by two players who hardly ever lose, namely Kramnik and Leko. So you are in good company if you want a solid, albeit slightly worse, position.

5...e6 Will transpose to code B14, or a Semi-Tarrasch after 6 ♟f3 ♟e7 7 cxd5 ♟xd5 8 ♟d3

6 ♟g5



This is more direct than 6.Nf3, White isn't interested in trying to grind out a win in the endgame that usually occurs here. The bold text move usually leads to a hard fought middlegame.

6 ♞f3 ♙g4 7 cxd5 ♞xd5 8 ♞b3 ♙xf3 (8... ♞xc3 9 bxc3 ♞c7 ? different, [Glodeanu,I-Fuhrmann,M/Miercurea Ciuc ROM 2004](#)) 9 gxf3

a) 9... ♞b6 ?! Black avoids the difficulties of the endgame, but this just seems good for White. 10 d5 (10 ♙e3 An equally good alternative. 10... e6 11 0-0-0 ♙e7 12 d5 ! This forces open lines in the centre which favours White's two bishops. 12... exd5 13 ♞xd5 ♞xd5 14 ♞xd5 [Payen,A-Koskinen,V/Jyvaskyla FIN 2000](#).) 10... ♞d4 11 ♙b5+ ! ♞d7 12 ♞a4 ♞xf3+ 13 ♙f1 ! This keeps the e2 square for the knight and is so best. 13... a6 14 ♙e2 ♞fe5 15 f4 ! [Rudolf,H-Fuhrmann,D/Porz GER 1998](#).

b) 9... e6 10 ♞xb7 ♞xd4 11 ♙b5+ ♞xb5 12 ♞c6+ ! (More accurate than the immediate 12 ♞xb5+ ♞d7 13 ♞xd7+ ♙xd7 as White wants to force an endgame in which the black king is on the worse square e7.) 12... ♙e7 13 ♞xb5 ♞d7 14 ♞xd5+ ♞xd5

b1) The zwischenzug 15 ♙g5+ !? is analysed in [Bologan,V-Velicka,P/Bern SUI 1999](#). A good idea or not? Although in some scenarios leaving the black pawn on f7 can make it a useful target for a white rook on the seventh rank, probably the answer is yes, as in the future the fact that the e6 square is available for a rook check can prove important. As you will see from the analysis of the Bologan game it was also Karpov's choice against Kramnik. 15... f6 16 ♞xd5 exd5 17 ♙e3 ♙e6 18 0-0-0 ♙b4 19 ♙b1 (White can also try for direct pressure on d5 with 19 ♞d3 which was Karpov's choice in his epic 99 (!) move battle against Kramnik at Linares in 1993.) 19... ♞hd8 20 ♞d3 ♞d7 21 ♞c1 a5 ! This fine move prevents Black being tied down to the a pawn after White's projected Rc6 and Ra6 .

b2) 15 ♞xd5 15... exd5

b2a) Another interesting example is 16 ♙f4 !? ♙f6 (16... ♙d7 Black decides his king will be best placed on c6, though it is eventually driven back over to e6. 17 0-0-0 ♙c6 18 ♞d3 ♙d6 !) 17 0-0-0 see [Onischuk,A-Dreev,A/Moscow RUS 2002](#).

b2b) 16 0-0 is also popular, 16... ♙e6 17 ♞e1+ ♙f5 18 ♞d1 [Adams,M-Dreev,A/Wijk aan Zee NED 2002](#).

b2c) 16 ♙e3 16... ♙e6 With his 16th move Black defends d5 and clears the way for his bishop to enter the game. It is evident that in the long term the pawn on d5 is going to come under attack. Therefore it is imperative for Black that he finds a way to

maintain its defence without putting one or more of his pieces in a dangerously passive situation. In fact a good player of Black will always be looking for the best moment to jettison the pawn in return for activity with his other pawns and pieces. This activity will usually consist of an attack on White's weakened kingside. Thus the black king will rarely finish the game on e6. Often he goes to the kingside to generate counterplay with ...Kf5 etc, usually in combination with an advance of the kingside pawns, or sometimes he goes to c6 via d7 to defend the d5 pawn in a different way if the situation requires it– which normally means the white rooks have driven him away from the e–file. Meanwhile, White's usual strategy is to attack the pawns on d5 and a7 and, if he can't win them, then at least tie down Black's pieces to their defence. 17 0-0-0 ♖b4 18 ♗b1 ♜hc8 Here, Black succeeds in holding the endgame with a precise mixture of patient defence and threatened counterplay, [David,P–Velicka,P/CZE 1998](#). However, in my opinion defending this endgame is a thankless task for Black, his general record is an awful lot of draws, the occasional loss and very rarely a win. Kramnik succeeded in getting an excellent position as Black against Karpov but if you enjoy your chess I would recommend you choose a different variation.

6...♗e6

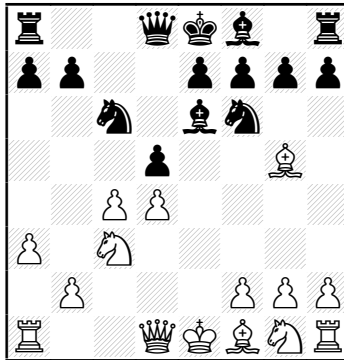
The most popular response, but other ideas deserve to be mentioned:

6...♖a5 7 ♗d2 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 ♘xd4? Curiously, the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings only gives (8...e6 without even mentioning this obvious capture, but that (and the fact that White has deliberately left it to be taken) should have 'told' Black "Don't dare devour the d4–pawn!".) 9 ♘b5 ♖b6 10 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 11 ♖a4+ 1-0 [Le Blancq,S–Eales,R/Folkestone 1984](#).

6...dxc4 7 d5 ♘a5 8 ♗xc4 ♘xc4 9 ♖a4+ ♗d7 10 ♖xc4 is quite unpleasant for Black since the white d5–pawn has a cramping effect on his development because it's not easy to find a safe way to move the e7–pawn forward to release the f8–bishop.

6...e6 often transposes to [B14], 7 ♘f3 ♗e7 8 c5 0-0 9 ♗b5 ♘e4 equalised in [Kluntt,K–Dautov,R/Bad Weissee 2001](#)

7 a3!?



This is one of the main weapons against the system with 5 ...Nc6 and 6 ...Be6, but why? Basically there are scenarios in which Black plays ...Qa5 (+) and it's useful to have the response b2–b4 handy. Also, in the future White may well close the centre with c4–c5, and then want to begin an attack with b2–b4, and 7.a3 will prove to have been a useful preparatory move. Thirdly, in some cases to have prevented Nc6–b4 will have been useful.

7 ♖e2!? This is a quiet move but as the game shows it can be dangerous against inaccurate play. 7...♙a5 The most active reply. 8 ♘f3 (8 c5 is slightly unusual, White hopes to play a3 and b4 with gain of tempo, which forces Black's hand, see [Morozevich, A–Anand, V/Moscow RUS 2002](#)) 8...♞d8 9 0-0 dxc4 10 ♞e1!? Ignoring any threat to capture on d4. 10...h6? 11 ♕xf6 gxf6 12 ♕f1! ♕g7 13 ♞xe6! This exchange sacrifice decides the game, [Kalod, R–Palkovi, J/CZE 1998](#).

7...♙d7 8 ♕xf6

The direct approach.

8 b4 ♞d8 9 ♕xf6 exf6 10 c5 g6 11 ♕b5! Of course the aim of this move is not to pin the Black Knight. Firstly, it is the only square the Bishop could be developed on to let the Knight on g1 go to e2 and secondly, as will be clear later the Bishop is not going to stay there, it will move to b3, creating pressure on the d5 pawn (together with Qa2 and maybe Nf4) and at the same time free the way for a queenside pawn advance. 11...♕h6 12 ♘ge2 0-0 13 0-0 f5 14 ♕a4! [Lanka, Z–Bauer, C/Cappelle 1994](#).

8...gxf6!

Typical for this line.

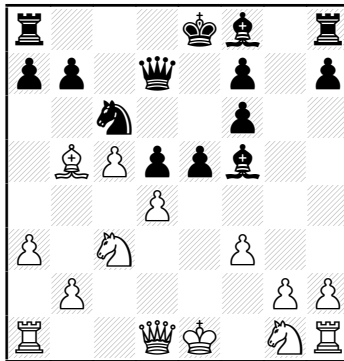
9 c5!

White stabilises the centre in order to develop his kingside. After that he has good attacking possibilities on the queenside with b4–b5 and so on.

9 ♖e2!? A clever move to rule out 9...Bg4. 9...0-0-0 10 c5 ♕f5? (Much more active was 10...♞g8! which by attacking g2 immediately would prevent White from carrying out

the strategy he employs in the game.) 11 ♖f3 e5 12 b4 ♜g8 13 0-0!! This prepares an excellent exchange sacrifice, [Hansen,C–Hector,J/Sigeman, Malmoe SWE 1998](#).
 9 g3?! 0-0-0! 10 ♗g2 The d5 square is creaking but Black does not care. 10...♗g4 Forcing White to close the long diagonal. 11 f3 ♗e6 12 c5 ♗f5 Now it is not necessary to retreat to e6, [Topalov,V–Leko,P/Vienna 1996](#).

9...♗g4 10 f3 ♗f5 11 ♗b5 e5



According to Zigurds Lanka, better was 11...♗h6 with the idea of putting the Bishop on e3 and castling kingside.

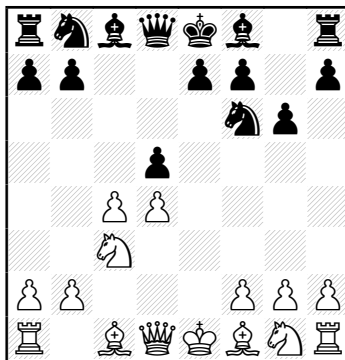
12 ♖ge2 0-0-0 13 0-0 ♜e6 14 ♔h1 ♗h6 15 ♗xc6!? bxc6 16 ♝e1 ♗e3 17 ♜a4

Having a pair of Knights, White successfully keeps Black's bishop pair unemployed thanks to his initiative on the queenside, [Lanka,Z–Leko,P/Budapest 1996](#).

Caro-Kann – Panov– 5...g6, 5...e6 [B14]

Last updated: 10/07/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 ♘f6 5 ♗c3 g6



The position now resembles the Grünfeld but without pawns on c7 and e2. At first glance you might think this difference favoured Black— after all, in the Grünfeld White is able to build a big centre with e2–e4. Perhaps in the long term there is some truth in this, but in the Panov set–up the fact that White's king's bishop isn't blocked in by a pawn on e2 gives him the chance to act quickly to gain a lasting initiative.

5...e6 is a solid alternative, that often leads to IQP positions: 6 ♘f3 (6 c5!? [Morozevich,A–Bareev,E/Dortmund GER 2002](#)) 6...♙b4 (6...♙e7 7 cxd5 ♖xd5 8 ♙d3 transposes to the Semi–Tarrasch.) 7 cxd5

a) 7...exd5 It is surely a question of taste, but I find this move passive. 8 ♙d3 0-0 (8...♗e7+ is perhaps the most solid, although utterly colourless: 9 ♖e5 ♖c6 10 0-0 0-0 [Potkin,V–Meister,Y/Sochi RUS 2004](#), a full game which typifies the dreary play in this line.) 9 0-0 ♖c6 10 ♙g5 ♙e6 11 ♞e1 with an edge, [Korneev,A–Dolmatov,S/56th ch–RUS, Krasnoyarsk RUS 2003](#)

b) 7...♖xd5

b1) 8 ♙d2 ♖c6 9 ♙d3 is also a good choice, 9...♙e7 10 0-0 0-0 (10...♖db4 [Bareev,E–Ljubojevic,L/Monaco MNC 2002](#)) 11 ♖xd5!? exd5 12 ♗b3 ♙f6 13 ♙c3 a5 14 a3 ♙g4!= [Lputian,S–Bologan,V/4th Karpov It, Poikovsky RUS 2003](#) Although Black got overambitious and went on to lose.

b2) 8 ♗c2 8...♖c6 (8...♗c7!? [Potkin,V–Asrian,K/Moscow RUS 2002](#))

b2a) avoiding the sharp pawn sac line: 9 ♙d3 ♙a5 10 a3 ♖xc3 11 bxc3 ♖xd4 12 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 13 ♙b5+ ♙d7 14 0-0 ♗d5 15 c4 ♗f5 16 ♙xd7+ ♔xd7

- b2b) or 9 a3!? ♖e7 (9...♗a5) 10 ♕d3 ♕f6 11 0-0 ♜xc3 12 bxc3 h6 13 ♖e2 ♖d5 14 ♝b1 a6 15 c4→ Black's opening hasn't been successful. His King is vulnerable in the centre and his Queen is a target. 15...♖h5 16 ♖e4± [Fedorowicz,J–Enhbat,T/Seattle 2003](#).
- b2c) 9 ♕e2 9...0-0 10 0-0 ♕e7 (an interesting alternative is 10...♞e8!? to make way for the bishop, 11 ♝d1 ♕d7 [Kharlov,A–Izoria,Z/Batumi GEO 2002](#) 10...♜f6 11 ♝d1 b6? runs into a strong response: 12 d5! see [Ehlvest,J–Potter,J/Virginia Beach USA 2004](#)) 11 ♝d1 ♖b6 (An unusual move, 11...♕f6 and 11...♜f6 being the most common. 11...♕f6 12 ♖e4 ♜ce7 13 h4 Sveshnikov uses the h–pawn as a battering ram against g6 but Malakhov defends comfortably and patiently. 13...♕d7 14 ♕d3 g6 15 h5 ♞c8 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 ♕h6 ♜xc3 18 bxc3 ♕c6 19 ♖f4 ♜d5 20 ♖g4 ♕g7 21 ♕xg7 ♜xg7 22 ♜e5 ♖f6!= [Sveshnikov,E–Malakhov,V/Aeroflot Open, Moscow RUS 2003](#)) 12 ♖e4!?! (Much more direct than 12 ♕d3) 12...♕f6 13 ♕d3 g6 14 ♕c4 Black's position becomes very passive after this. 14...♜xc3 (14...♜ce7?! 15 ♜e5 [Kharlov,A–Prakash,G/Calcutta IND 2001](#).) 15 bxc3 ♖a5 looks better.
- 5...♜c6 6 ♕g5! This move was introduced by Mikhail Botvinnik in the early thirties and remains White's main weapon nowadays. (6 ♜f3 is the main alternative, but it usually leads to an approximately equal endgame– see B13.) 6...e6 (other moves are also considered in B13) 7 ♜f3 ♕e7 (7...dxc4 8 ♕xc4 ♕e7 9 0-0 0-0 is a way to get a reliable position with slightly better chances for White.) 8 c5 h6 9 ♕f4 ♜e4 10 ♕b5!?! (It is hard to say whether 10 ♞c1!?! was better.) 10...♜xc3 11 bxc3 ♕d7 12 0-0 0-0 The position looks good for Black, he is going to undermine the queenside with ...b7–b6. Kasparov finds a strange–looking way to prevent this key idea. 13 ♞c1! Other moves allow Black to go b7–b6 obtaining comfortable play– [Kasparov,G–Anand,V/Amsterdam 1996](#).

6 ♖b3

Theory has focussed on this move, but the immediate

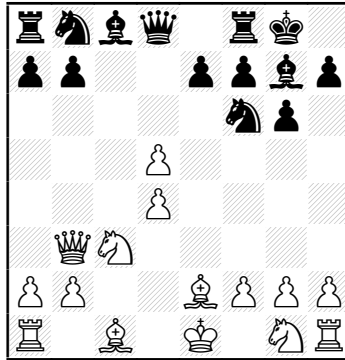
6 cxd5 also has quite a few followers.

- a) After 6...♕g7 White could if he wished transpose to the 6 Qb3 line, but he has other options, e.g. 7 ♕b5+!?! ♜bd7 8 d6! exd6 (The gambit 8...0-0!?! has been used with success by David Bronstein and others.) 9 ♖e2+ ♖e7 10 ♕f4 ♖xc2+ 11 ♕xe2 ♜e7 12 ♕f3
- b) 6...♜xd5 7 ♕c4 ♜b6 8 ♕b3 ♕g7 9 ♜f3 ♜c6
- b1) 10 d5 ♜a5 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♞e1 ♜xb3 (More dynamic was 12...♕g4!) 13 axb3! By opening the a–file White rules out the manoeuvre ...Rc8–c5 as it would leave a7 hanging, [Glek,I–Szabolcsi,J/ Paris FRA 2000](#).
- b2) Less effective is 10 ♕e3 10...0-0 11 d5 ♜a5 12 0-0 ♕g4 13 h3 ♕xf3 14 ♖xf3 ♜bc4 15 ♕c1 ♜xb3 16 axb3 ♜d6 when Black had a secure fortress in Pavasovic–Brendel, Vienna 1996. White is bound to play d4–d5 at some point so it seems worth reserving the option of Bc1–g5 or Bf4 rather than committing the bishop straightaway to e3.

6...♕g7 7 cxd5 0-0

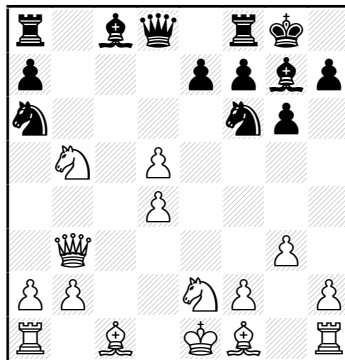
Now White has to make a critical decision— should he try to defend d5 with the straightforward fianchetto g2–g3 and Bg2 (after Nge2) or should he play the slightly more subtle— or 'artificial' depending on your point of view!— plan of Be2 and Bf3.

8 ♗e2!



Aiming for 9 Bf3 may be the superior way to develop the bishop,
 Instead, 8 ♗ge2 ♗a6 9 g3 b5!? or he could play in quiet style with (9...b6 intending to aim as many pieces as possible at the target on d5. However it doesn't seem to give equality, or

The well established move is 9... ♖b6 with a critical position being reached after 10 ♗xb6 axb6 11 ♗g2 ♗b4 12 0-0 ♖d8 13 d6!) 10 ♗xb5



This is critical, but the tame (10 a3 leads to an instructive position after 10... ♖b8 11 ♗f4 ♖b6 12 ♗g2 b4 13 ♗a4 ♖b7 Black's rook is buffeted around, but White isn't able to exploit it. Meanwhile 10 ♗xb5 ♖b8 11 ♗a4 ♗b4 intending Nd3+ and Bf5 is too dangerous for White.) 10... ♗xd5 11 ♗g2 ♗e6 12 ♗d1 ♗a5+ 13 ♗bc3 ♗xc3 14 bxc3 Adams,M–Granda Zuniga,J/It, Madrid ESP 1998.

8... ♗bd7

8...♖a6!? 9 ♕f4! (9 ♕f3 ♜b6 seemed OK for Black in [Gelfand,B–Morozevich,A/Wijk aan Zee NED 2002](#)) 9...♗c7?! 10 ♕f3 ♗fe8 11 ♕e5! An important move, securing dark-squared central control as well as weakening the black king, 11...♗d6 12 ♕xg7 ♖xg7 13 ♗ge2 b6 14 0-0 ♕a6 15 ♜fe1 ♕c4 16 ♜d1 ♜d7 17 b3 ♕a6 18 ♜d2 ♕b7 19 ♗f4 ♜ac8 20 ♜e5!± [Lyell,M–Arkell,K/Coventry 2004](#), White is in full control and a Kingside attack with h2–h4 isn't far away.

9 ♕f3 ♗b6 10 ♕g5

Perhaps stronger was 10 ♗ge2 e.g. 10...♕g4 11 ♕xg4 ♗xg4 12 ♕f4 ♜d7 13 a4 ♜ad8 14 d6! exd6 15 a5 ♗c8 16 0-0 as in [Stoica–Suciu, Romania 1994](#). Black has relinquished control of the d5 square and is content to have a rather passive but solid looking position.

10...♕g4

Black decides to force clarity in the centre when it becomes a question of whether he can regain his pawn without making any serious positional concession. More dynamic was

10...a5!? which greatly complicates matters.

11 ♕xf6 ♕xf3 12 ♗xf3 ♕xf6 13 0-0 ♜d6 14 ♗e5!?

This is the best chance to prove an advantage, [Hebden,M–Hansen,T/Hastings ENG 1999](#).

SUMMARY:

Maybe at the level of club chess 5...g6 might be effective, but studying the line has left me with serious doubts about its validity in international chess.

Caro-Kann: 3 Nc3 – Intro & Korchnoi's

5...exf6 [B15]

Last updated: 23/09/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4

3...g6 is a hybrid of the Caro-Kann and Modern, quite rare, which can lead to some very murky play.

- a) 4 ♗f3 ♕g7 5 h3 is possibly best, 5...♗h6 (5...dxe4 6 ♗xe4 ♗d7 is very quiet indeed, [Lekic,D–Burmakin,V/Christmas Open, Zurich SUI 2003](#), and after 7 ♕c4!, White obtains an edge.) 6 ♕f4 (6 ♕d3! with the idea of ♗e2 and a quick c2–c4 is most testing.) 6...f6 7 ♕d3 (7 exd5! cxd5 8 ♗b5 ♗a6 9 c4 is more to the point) 7...♗f7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♕g3 e6 10 ♖e1 ♗d7 11 ♖d2 a5 12 h4 a4 [Nijboer,F–Bosboom,M/Leeuwarden NED 2004](#) and now I recommend 13 exd5 exd5 14 ♖e2±
- b) 4 ♕e3 ♕g7 5 f3! is interesting, [Miladinovic,I–Bellini,F/46th It, Reggio Emilia ITA 2003](#)
- c) 4 e5 has been played often enough, but is inflexible. 4...h5 (4...♕g7 5 f4 ♗h6! A plausible alternative to 5 ...h5 which leads to the Gurgendidze system proper, 6 ♗f3 f6 7 ♕d3 ♕g4 8 h3 ♕xf3 9 ♖xf3 0-0 10 e6 f5 11 ♖e3 c5 12 ♖f3 c4 13 ♕e2 ♗c6 14 ♕e3 ♕xd4 15 ♗xd5 [Klenburg,M–Kantsler,B/1st Israel Int Op, Ashdod ISR 2003](#) when 15...♕xb2 should have been played, with a very messy position.) 5 h3 a5! 6 ♗f3 ♗a6! [Furdzik,R–Blatny,P/New York 2003](#), Blatny's style is very hard to fathom for the average crusty punter. He completely bamboozles Furdzik here.

4 ♗xe4

4 ♕c4?! A very rare gambit line which has never occurred in the games on top level according to my database. The ideas of this line are similar to Blackmar–Diemer Gambit (1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 Nc3 Nf6). By playing f2–f3 on the next move White opens the f–file and tries to obtain an early attack (the f7–square is usually the main target). However Black has very solid defensive resources and I believe this line is dubious for White. 4...♗f6 5 f3

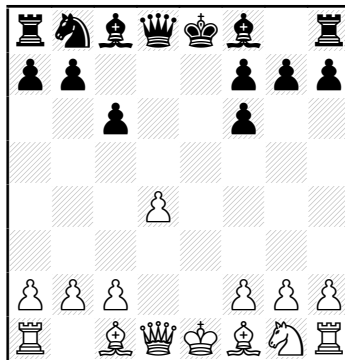
- a) Accepting the sacrifice is possible as well although Black must defend carefully. 5...exf3 6 ♗xf3 ♕f5! Transferring the Bishop to the g6–square where it is very well placed for defending the King. (6...e6?! is less precise and White obtains good attacking chances.) 7 ♗e5 e6 8 0-0 ♕g6! Now the f7–square is firmly protected, and it's not easy for White to continue the attack.

b) 5...b5!? 6 ♖b3 e6 7 fxe4 b4 8 ♗ce2 ♗xe4 9 ♗f3 ♕a6 10 0-0 Short,N–Bareev,E/Sarajevo 2000.

4...♗f6 5 ♗xf6+

5 ♗g5!? looks poor but the idea is to dominate e5: 5...h6 6 ♗5f3 ♕f5 7 ♕c4 e6 8 ♗e5 ♕d6 (8...♗bd7 and a quick exchange on e5 is a good response.) 9 ♖e2 ♖c7 10 f4 ♗bd7 11 ♗gf3 the plan in action, Mrdja,M–Danieli,E/IV Open, Lido Estensi ITA 2003.

5...exf6



Unlike 5...gxf6 which aims at achieving active counterplay, Black has rather more modest plans here. He has no problems with development or bad pieces, so he hopes to equalize by accurate defence. However this line is completely out of fashion now. Of course it's by no means bad, but in modern chess Black prefers systems where he can hope for active counterplay. The following game is one of a very small number which have been played in this line at the top level in the last decade.

6 c3

Tournament practice has shown that this is the most unpleasant plan for Black to have to face. White defends the d4–pawn and prepares a harmonious set–up of his pieces: Bd3, Ne2 and kingside castling.

6 ♗f3 is also possible, 6...♕d6 7 ♕e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♕g4 9 h3 ♕h5 10 ♗h4! Kuba,G–Schoeppl,E/TCh–AUT 2003.

6...♕d6 7 ♕d3 0-0

Black has also tried 7...♕e6 but without success. The game Volzhin – Zangiev, Russia 1996 continued: 8 ♗e2 ♗d7 9 0-0 ♖c7 10 ♗g3! h5 11 f4! g6 This move makes kingside castling impossible, because White will obtain a winning attack after f4–f5. So Black should castle queenside, but his King will hardly feel safe there. But it's

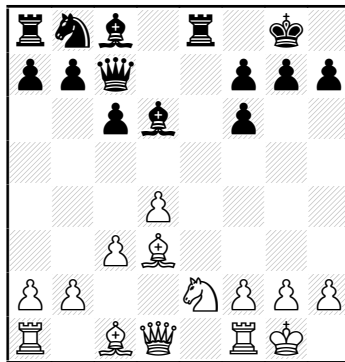
difficult to find a better move than the text anyway. 12 c4 0-0-0 13 ♖e3 Now d4–d5 opening files near Black's King, is a dangerous threat.

8 ♘e2 ♜e8 9 0-0!

Simple and good.

9 ♛c2 g6 10 h4 is another possibility, but it leads to double-edged positions after 10...♘d7 11 h5 f5

9...♛c7



There are two alternatives to the text: 9...♗g4 10 ♛c2

9...♘d7 10 ♗f4 both lead to a small but lasting advantage for White. Black's problem here is that he has no counterplay and has to fight for a draw.

10 ♘g3

10 h3 ♘d7 11 c4 b6 12 ♗e3 g6 13 ♛d2 f5 14 ♗g5± White plays as simply as can be and keeps a small edge due to his better pawns, [Turner,M–Vulevic,V/Davos SUI 2004](#).

10...♗e6

Other possibilities are hardly better: 10...c5 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 ♘c4

10...g6 11 ♘e4 ♗e7 12 ♛f3 ♛d8 13 ♗f4 with a clear edge for White in both cases.

11 f4! c5 12 d5! ♗d7

The pawn is taboo: 12...♗xd5? 13 ♛h5! ♗e6 14 ♛xh7+ ♗f8 15 ♘h5! with a winning attack

13 c4!

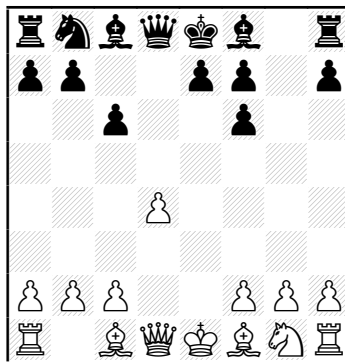
Now White's advantage is obvious. An excellent game by Alexander Khalifman, [Khalifman,A–Seirawan,Y/Wijk 1991](#).

Caro-Kann – Larsen/Bronstein, 5...gxf6

[B16]

Last updated: 23/09/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dx e4 4 Nxe4 Nf6 5 Nxf6+ gxf6



This line was introduced by Aron Nimzowitch at the beginning of the 20th century. It always leads to a very sharp and complicated game. By voluntarily damaging his pawn structure Black hopes to obtain active counterplay by exploiting the open g-file. Although nowadays this line has a rather dubious reputation and is rarely played at the top level, it remains a useful weapon for the club player.

6 c3

6 Nc3

- The less precise 6... Nf4 was played in R. Maric – Krziznik, Vukovar, 1966. White managed to obtain a clear edge.
- 6...h5!? 7 h4 (7 Nf4 This somewhat sophisticated move was tried in Baturinsky – Simagin, Moscow 1946. Soviet GM Vladimir Simagin contributed much to the theory of this line and played a lot of excellent games with it. Black now outplays his opponent very convincingly: 7... Nf5 8 Nc3 Nf6 9 h4 Nd7 10 Nc2 e5! Exploiting the drawbacks of White's set-up.) 7... Nf4 8 Nc3 e5!? 9 Nc3 Na6 10 a3 This careless move allows Black to seize the initiative. (10 c3 was obligatory, with mutual chances.) 10... Na5+ 11 Nd2 Nb6 12 dx e5 Nc5 13 Nc3 0-0-0! Now it's obvious that

Black has outplayed his opponent. All his forces are actively developed, while all White's pieces are miserably placed, [Mikhalchishin,A–Speelman,J/Frunze 1979](#).

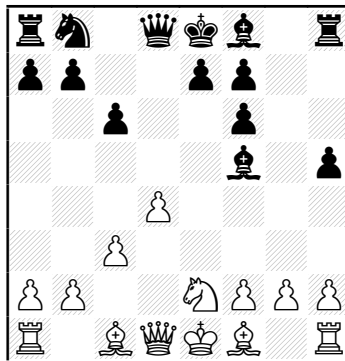
c) 6...♙f5 7 ♘g3 ♙g6 8 h4 h5 9 ♙e2 ♘d7 10 c3 ♚a5 11 a4! An important improvement. White simply prepares a pawn advance on the Queenside, because sooner or later Black will probably castle there. (It's not so good to win a pawn immediately: 11 b4 ♚c7 12 ♘xh5 ♙xh5 13 ♙xh5 a5! and Black has sufficient counterplay, as the game Boskovic – Rohde, USA 1979 showed.) 11...0-0-0 (Immediate counterplay in the centre without castling looks premature: 11...e5 12 b4 ♚d5 13 0-0! exd4 14 cxd4 White is threatening b4–b5 and grabbing the pawn is risky in view of 14...♙xb4 15 ♙f3 with a growing initiative.) 12 b4 ♚c7 13 a5 e5 14 a6 b6 15 0-0 e4!? A very important novelty. This move was recommended by A.Rodriguez in his notes in Informant 44, but hadn't been tested in practice before now! Both of these games show that after the opening of the c–file Black's position is indefensible. The text keeps it closed. (15...♙d6 was played in [Rodriguez,A–Pieterse,G/Dieren 1987](#), and White got the upper hand after 16 ♙d3!) 16 b5 ♘e5 [Espindola,C–Blasberg,G/corr. 1996](#).

6 ♘f3 is straightforward, 6...♙g4 7 ♙e2 ♚c7 8 h3 ♙h5 9 ♘h4! recognising that exchanges improve White's chances, 9...♙xe2 10 ♚xe2 e6 11 0-0 ♘d7 12 c4 0-0-0 13 ♙e3 c5 14 ♚ac1 ♙g8 15 ♘f3 ♚c6 16 d5 exd5 17 cxd5 ♚xd5 18 ♚fd1 ♚c6? (18...♚e6 is less clear) 19 b4! with advantage, [Grigoriants,S–Rogers,I/Essent Open, Hooegeveen NED 2003](#).

6 ♙e2 is rare and will probably transpose back into main lines involving ♘f3: 6...♙f5 7 ♘f3 e6 8 0-0 ♙d6 9 c4 ♘d7 10 d5! exd5 11 cxd5 e5 12 ♙h6! ♙g6 13 ♚b3 White has a strong initiative, [Kosteniuk,A–Chua,A/Fort Lauderdale USA 2004](#).

6...♙f5 7 ♘f3

7 ♘e2 h5!?



A typical move for this line. 8 ♘f4 h4 9 ♚f3 (Either 9 ♙c4 aiming at f7 and threatening Qb3 or 9 ♙d3 exchanging Black's only active piece should be preferred.) 9...♘d7 10 g4 hxg3

a) White rejected the natural 11 hxg3 in view of 11...♙g4 12 ♚g2 ♘e5!, but it's not too bad after 13 ♙e2 (even 13 ♚xh8!? is not bad: 13...♘f3+ 14 ♚xf3 ♙xf3 15 ♘e6! fxe6 16 ♙h6 and White wins all his material back!) 13...♚xh1+ 14 ♚xh1 ♙xe2 15 ♘xe2 with approximately equal chances.

b) 11 fxg3 11...c5!? 12 g4 (12 ♖e2 ♙e6 and Black is OK.) 12...♙h7 13 ♖e2 exd4!? 14 cxd4 (14 ♖xd4 ♖e5 and Black's Knight will permanently occupy this excellent central square, while White's Knight can be driven away by c6–c5 at the right moment.) 14...♙b4+ 15 ♖f2 ♗e7 16 ♙g2 [Bilek,I–Bronstein,D/Hungary – USSR 1955](#).

A quarter of a century after this game Bronstein had another interesting encounter in this line. The game Ivanovic – Bronstein, Tallinn, 1979 continued: 7 ♙c4 e6 8 ♗f3 ♖d7 9 ♖e2 h5 10 ♖f4 h4 11 ♙e3 ♗c7 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13 g4?! hxg3 14 hxg3 ♗xh1 15 ♗xh1 (Probably White had missed that the natural looking 15 ♗xh1 fails to 15...c5! and Black takes the upper hand as 16 dxc5 is bad: 16...♖e5 17 ♗e2 ♗c6 18 ♗h8 ♗e4 and Black wins.) 15...♗a5! 16 ♖d3 (16 ♗f3 allows a brilliant mate: 16...♖e5!! 17 dxe5 ♗xc3+!! 18 bxc3 ♙a3#) 16...♖b6 17 ♙b3 ♖d5 18 ♗e1 ♙g4 19 ♖d2 ♙d6 20 ♖b1 ♗h8 21 ♙d1 ♙f5 22 ♙e2? A blunder, but Black's position is already far superior. 22...♙xg3 Black wins a pawn for nothing and he soon won the game.

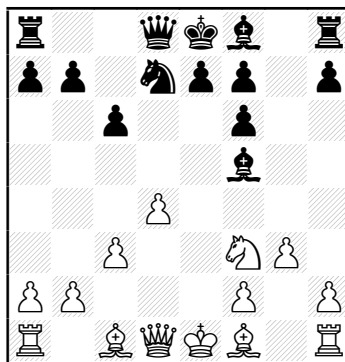
7...♖d7

7...e6 8 g3 h5!?

a) 9 ♗e2 The idea behind this is to prevent the emergence of Black's Bishop on the e4-square. 9...♙g4! 10 h3 Forced, as (10 ♙g2?! h4 is very good for Black.) 10...♙xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♗d5! After the queen swap Black has little to worry about. So we can conclude that in this game Black solved his opening problems very easily—[Valverde,A–Blasberg,G/corr. 1997](#).

b) 9 ♙g2 This natural move looks more to the point than 9...♙e4 10 0-0 ♙e7 11 ♖e1 f5 12 ♙f1 (12 h4!? ♖d7 13 ♙f1!? ♙xf3 Black is forced to give up the Bishop. 14 ♗xf3 ♖f6 15 ♙g5 ♗d5 16 ♗e2 [Bennett,G–Blasberg,G/corr. 1996](#).) 12...c5! 13 ♙e3 ♖c6 14 ♙b5 h4 15 ♖d2 hxg3 16 fxg3 [Riemersma,L–Pieterse,G/Netherlands 1987](#).

8 g3!



This is one of the best plans in this line, and I believe it is the system which more than any other is discouraging Black players from 5...gxh6. After developing his Bishop to g2 White can easily castle kingside, as now Black has no pressure on the g-file. Of

course the fianchetto should be combined with developing the Knight to f3 as in this game, and not to e2 as Black will then play h5–h4 with good chances.

8...♖b6

Black is planning quite an aggressive set-up (Qd7 with Queenside castling to follow). However, the quiet 8...♙c4!? intending Kingside castling, deserves serious attention: 9 ♙g2 e6 10 0-0 ♙g7 11 ♞e1 f5 and White's advantage is minimal.

9 ♙g2 ♞d7 10 0-0 h5

10...♙h3 was the alternative to the text. 11 ♙xh3 ♞xh3 12 a4! ♞d7 13 a5 ♖c8 with the better prospects for White.

11 a4! ♙h3?!

11...a5 was forced, although it's much easier to recommend such a move than to make it in a game. Now Queenside castling is hardly possible as White can easily open files near Black's King. But in the game things are even worse for Black.

12 ♙xh3 ♞xh3

Black has very little initiative on the Kingside and after a few, crisp moves faces an almost decisive queenside onslaught.

13 a5 ♖c8

13...♖d5 14 ♞b3 0-0-0 15 a6 was also good for White in [Sherzer,A–Filipovich,D/34th NCC, Philadelphia USA 2003](#).

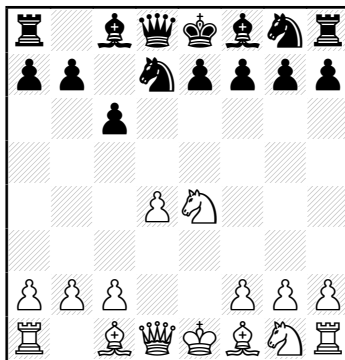
14 a6 b6 15 d5!

White exploits the advantages of his position very energetically, [Campora,D–Morozevich,A/Moscow 1994](#).

Caro-Kann – Smyslov– 4...Nd7 [B17]

Last updated: 12/04/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Nd7



Some important games have been played in the Smyslov Variation. This whole line looks rock solid – and that despite the best efforts of the World's elite to refute it.

5 Ng5

This move remains White's main weapon.

5 Bc4 is the old main line. 5...Ngf6 6 Ng5 e6 7 Qe2 This move develops the Queen and contains the unpleasant threat of Nxf7 with a mating attack. Black's reply is forced.
(7 Nf3) 7...Bb6

a) 8 Bb3 is quite a different story. 8...h6 9 N5f3

a1) Two years later Karpov came up with a very important improvement. His game versus Kasparov in Linares 1994 continued: 9...a5! 10 c3 (10 a4 c5 Karpov proved in later games that the interpolation of the moves a5 and a4 favours Black as it becomes dangerous for White to castle Queenside.) 10...c5! 11 a3 Qc7!

a2) 9...c5 10 Bf4 Bd6 There are two main alternatives to the text. 11 Bg3! Qe7 12 dxc5 Bxc5 13 Ne5 Bd7 14 Ngf3 Nh5 It looks natural to swap this Bishop off before castling queenside. 15 0-0-0 Nxg3 16 hxg3 Kasparov,G–Karpov,A/Linares 1992.

b) 8 Bd3 8...h6 (The pawn is poisoned: 8...Qxd4? 9 Nf3 Intending Ne5 after the Queen's retreat, winning the f7-pawn, and if 9...Bb4+ then 10 c3! Bxc3+ 11 Qf1! and White wins a piece.) 9 N5f3 c5 10 dxc5 is considered to be the main line. (10 Bc3 The text move deserves serious attention. It's invariably the choice of Sergey Rublevsky against the

Caro–Kann. 10... ♖bd5 11 ♗e5 a6 12 ♗gf3 ♖c7 13 0-0 cxd4?! This novelty is of rather doubtful value. 14 ♗xd4 ♗c5 15 ♗b5+!?! An unpleasant check which forces the black King to forget about castling, and instead castle by hand, [Rublevsky,S–Karpov,A/Polanica Zdroj 1998.](#)) 10... ♗xc5

b1) 11 ♗e5 ♖bd7 12 ♗gf3 ♖c7 (12... ♗xe5 13 ♗xe5 0-0 is another possibility. However after the text move Black's practical results are better.) 13 ♗f4 (13 0-0 ♗xe5 14 ♗xe5 0-0 15 ♖e1 ♗d6 16 h3 b6 17 ♗d2 ♗b7 18 ♗g4= [Webb,R–Wells,P/Portsmouth ENG 2004](#) A variation to play if one is happy with a draw or, in this case where you know the opponent is breaking his back to win and might overpress. Eventually White won.) 13... ♗b4+!?! Trying to disorganize White's forces a little. 14 ♖f1 ♗d6 15 ♖d1!?! Other continuations do not pose serious problems for Black, [Morovic Fernandez,I–Karpov,A/Las Palmas 1994.](#)

b2) 11 ♗d2 11... 0-0 12 0-0-0 ♗a4! This is a novelty. This lunge looks dubious, but concrete analysis proves it to be strong. Intending ...Qb6 Black begins immediate action on the queenside. Previously other moves had been played but all of them are much weaker. 13 ♗b5 ♗d7 14 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 15 ♗h3 ♖ac8 16 ♖b1 ♖c6 17 ♗c1 ♗d5 Black's initiative grows quickly. The situation is already quite unpleasant for White, in particular he has to spend another tempo parrying the threat of ...Nc3– [Georgiev,K–Adams,M/ Groningen 1993.](#)

5 ♖e2!?! ♗df6 6 c3 ♗xe4 7 ♖xe4 ♗f6 8 ♖c2 e6 (8... ♗g4!) 9 ♗f3 ♖c7 10 g3 b6 11 ♗g2 ♗b7 12 0-0 ♗d6 13 ♖e1± Rather surprisingly, White has a nagging edge, [Melia,S–Gilbert,J/WYg16, Heraklio GRE 2002.](#)

5 ♗f3 ♗gf6

a) 6 ♗eg5 h6 7 ♗h3 (7 ♗e6 fxe6 8 ♗d3 is the only way if White wants any success in this line.) 7... g5 8 ♗hg1 ♗g7 9 ♗d3 c5 10 dxc5 ♗xc5!± [Zwanzger,J–Conquest,S/Bundesliga 2002](#)

b) 6 ♗xf6+ 6... ♗xf6 7 ♗e5 ♗f5 (7... ♗e6 8 ♗e2 g6 9 0-0 ♗g7 [Kundin,A–Bykhovsky,A/Last Autumn GM, Tel Aviv ISR 2002.](#)) 8 c3 e6 9 g4 ♗g6 10 h4 ♗d6 11 ♖e2 c5 12 ♗g2 cxd4 13 h5 d3! [Haba,P–Burmakin,V/Pardubice 2003](#), this was a remarkable tactical display throughout by Burmakin. One could see the entire game as opening theory!

5... ♗gf6 6 ♗d3

6 ♗c4

a) 6... ♗d5!?! 7 ♗1f3 h6 8 ♗e4 ♗7b6 9 ♗b3 ♗f5 10 ♗g3 ♗g6? (10... ♗h7∞ is a clear improvement and has been played many times by Grandmaster Eduard Meduna.) 11 ♗e5 ♖d6 12 c4 ♗b4 13 c5+– [Dumitru,V–Anuta,L/CUPA TC IND, Ploiesti ROM 2002.](#)

b) 6... e6 7 ♖e2 ♗b6

b1) 8 ♗b3 White's Bishop gives insurance on the Queenside. 8... h6 9 ♗5f3 c5 10 c3 ♖c7 11 ♗d2 a6 12 ♗e5 ♗d7 13 ♗gf3 cxd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗d6 15 ♗xd7 ♗bxd7 16 ♗f5 Doubts about the Black King position are raised after this move

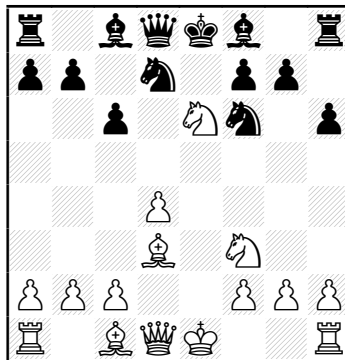
b1a) Black has to try 16... ♗f8 17 ♗xe6 (17 0-0-0 0-0-0∞) 17... fxe6 18 ♖xe6+ ♖d8 19 0-0-0 ♖c6 20 ♖he1 ♖xe6 21 ♖xe6 ♖c8

b1b) 16...♔f4? Nielsen falters. 17 ♕xf4 ♖xf4 18 ♜xg7+ ♔f8 19 ♜h5 ♜xh5 20 ♖xh5±
[Anand,V–Nielsen,P/SIS–MH Masters, Middelfart DEN 2003](#) White negotiated the immediate complications and went on to win a fine game.

b2) 8 ♕d3 8...h6 9 ♜5f3 c5 10 dxc5 ♜bd7! my favourite move here, 11 ♕f4 (Black envisages an interesting initiative after 11 b4 a5 12 c3 ♕e7 to be followed by ...0-0, ...axb4 and ...b7–b6!) 11...♜d5 12 ♕d2 ♕xc5 [Montes de Oca,A–Ezat,M/Olympiad, Bled SLO 2002](#).

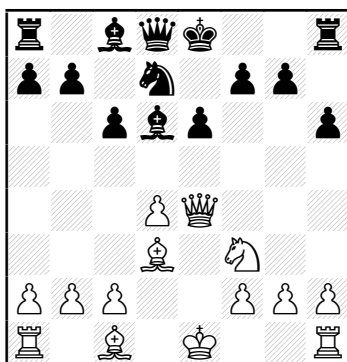
6...e6 7 ♜1f3 ♕d6

7...h6?! What??? The World Champion makes a move which was refuted by force ten years before this game! I can't believe that Kasparov didn't know this, probably he did not expect that a computer would sacrifice a piece for a pawn without a clear way to win back some material over the next couple of moves. 8 ♜xe6!



8...♖e7?! Not the best reaction again. (8...fxe6 looks more to the point although after 9 ♕g6+ ♔e7 10 0-0 ♖c7 11 ♖e1 ♔d8 12 c4 Black's position is rather difficult to play.) 9 0-0 fxe6 10 ♕g6+ ♔d8 11 ♕f4 White has only one pawn for the sacrificed piece and has no direct threats, but the lack of coordination of Black's forces and the bad position of Black's King give White huge compensation. [Deep Blue–Kasparov,G/New York 1997](#).

8 ♖e2 h6 9 ♜e4 ♜xe4 10 ♖xe4



Karpov defended this position three times in Linares 2001, and could easily have amassed two and a half points.

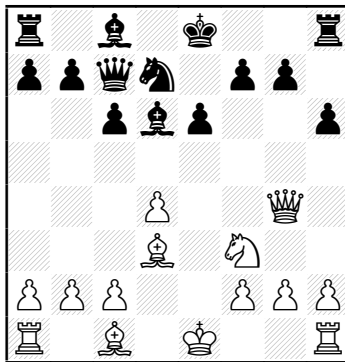
10...♖c7

The modern "tabia" of the Smyslov Variation. Here White has 2 main possibilities:

10...♘f6

- a) 11 ♖h4 ♔e7! A very unexpected idea which was first introduced in this game. Black is threatening ...g7-g5! 12 ♘e5 White is practically forced to give up a pawn. 12...♙xe5 13 dxe5 ♖a5+ 14 c3 ♖xe5+ 15 ♕e3 The critical position for the whole line. White's compensation looks good enough. Black's King is not safe and the Bishop on c8 is not very good, but the black pawn shield is rather solid. The position is probably unclear and is playable for both sides. 15...b6 16 0-0-0 g5 Now White comes up with a clear improvement. 17 ♖h3! (17 ♖a4 c5 Removing the weakness on the dark squares, as well as improving his own light-squared Bishop, [Kamsky,G-Karpov,A/Dortmund 1993.](#)) 17...c5 18 ♖he1 ♙b7 19 ♙c4! Looking closely at the square e6, [Morozevich,A-Iordachescu,V/Kishinev \(Moldova\) 1998.](#)
- b) 11 ♖c2 This continuation is more popular than 11...♖c7 (11...b6 12 ♙d2 ♙b7 Until this moment both sides have played natural developing moves. Now White has to choose a plan. 13 ♘e5! Choosing a good moment to occupy an important central square. 13...♖c7 14 f4! Simple and powerful: now the Knight is very threatening for Black, [Tiviakov,S-Adams,M/Wijk aan Zee 1996.](#)) 12 ♙d2 b6 13 0-0-0 ♙b7 14 ♔b1 Theory doesn't consider this quiet positional line as dangerous for Black, but Dolmatov has something in mind. (14 ♘e5 0-0-0 15 f4 h5! A new move and a good idea. Often in this line, Black has problems controlling White's activities on the kingside, and as a result it often looks like a steam train rolling down. 15...h5!?) is aimed at preventing White from getting something started. [Macieja,B-Meduna,E/Budapest HUN 2000.](#)) 14...0-0-0 15 c4 c5 16 ♙c3 [Dolmatov,S-Svetushkin,D/Linares Open 2000.](#)

11 ♖g4



- 11 0-0! The critical move of the moment. 11...b6 (11...c5 12 ♖e1 ♜f6 13 ♗h4 White's simple play was effective in [Kveinys,A–Speelman,J/Olympiad, Bled SLO 2002](#)) 12 ♗g4
- a) 12...♔f8 Speelman wriggles, but he has admitted that he fears for the future of 4...♞d7 because of this very line. 13 b3
- a1) 13...c5!? Must just be the solution: 14 dxc5 ♞xc5 15 ♟b2 e5 16 ♟f5 h5 17 ♗h3 ♞e6 18 ♟xe6 ♟xe6 19 ♗g3 f6 20 ♞h4 ♗xc2!? (20...♔g8! is better and Black has at least equality.) 21 ♖ad1 ♟c5 22 ♟xe5 → [Vescovi,G–Miton,K/Moscow RUS 2004](#)
- a2) 13...♟b7 14 ♟b2 ♞f6 15 ♗h4 c5 16 dxc5 ♗xc5 17 ♟d4! ♗a5 18 ♟xf6 gxf6 19 ♟e4!± [Ganguly,S–Speelman,J/Gibraltar 2004](#)
- b) 12...g5! A typical idea introduced by Karpov in his game vs. Sion (1993). 13 ♗h3 The only move. 13...♖g8 14 ♞d2 ♟b7 15 a4!? An interesting novelty. Obviously Black intends Q-side castling, so White opens the a-file without delay. 15...0-0-0 16 a5 [Ponomariov,R–Galkin,A/Lausanne 2000](#).

11...♔f8

Currently this variation is very popular– Black is doing well in this line.

- 11...g5 After this disastrous game Black players have switched away from this move. 12 ♗h3! ♖g8 Black is playing as Karpov did against Sion, but there is a small but very important difference here. 13 ♞d2! Here the moves ♟d2 and ...b6 have been omitted, and this makes this very strong Knight manoeuvre possible– [Kasparov,G–Kamsky,G/Linares 1994](#).

12 0-0 c5 13 ♗h4

Others:

- 13 c3 b6 14 ♗h4 ♟b7 15 ♟e4 ♟xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♔e7 17 dxc5 bxc5! (The natural looking 17...♞xc5 is not so good because the Knight is now too far away from the K-side (the best place for it is f6) and after 18 ♗c2! it's not easy for Black to complete his development and evacuate his King (with ...♖hd8 and ...♔f8) as White's Queen is ready to penetrate to h7 at the right moment.) 18 ♖e1 ♞f6 [Leko,P–Anand,V/Linares Super GM 2000](#).

13 b3!? Leko's preparation, 13...e5 (13...cxd4!? wins a pawn, but White has compensation, 14 ♖xd4 ♗e5! [Leko,P–Karpov,A/Linares ESP 2001](#).) 14 c3 b6 15 ♖e1 cxd4! 16 cxd4 ♗c5! with near equality, [Shirov,A–Karpov,A/Moscow RUS 2002](#).

13 ♖e1!? The favorite move of young Armenian GM Karen Asrian. 13...b6 14 c3 (14 ♗e5?! cxd4! The only move. It looks extremely risky, but concrete variations show that Black has made the right choice. 15 ♗g6+ fxc6 16 ♖f3+ ♗f6 17 ♖xa8 ♕xh2+ [Forster,R–Khalifman,A/Bad Woerishofen 1996](#). 14 dxc5!? ♗xc5 15 ♕d2! This is the idea behind White's previous move. By giving up his strong Bishop White hopes for a development advantage and to exploit the open c–file. Besides Bc3 is quite an unpleasant threat, aiming for the g7–square. 15...h5! Speelman finds the only way to equality. The idea is to drive White's Queen away from her active position, and thereby relieve the pressure on the g7–square: [Ponomariov,R–Speelman,J/Hastings 1998](#).) 14...♕b7 15 ♖h3 (15 h4!? A very clever idea. White wants to play h4–h5, blocking Black's kingside

after this it will be difficult for Black to develop his Rook on h8. 15...♖e8 16 h5 ♕d5 [Topalov,V–Anand,V/Linares \(Spain\) 1998](#).) 15...c4 16 ♕e4 ♕xc4 17 ♖xc4 ♖c6 18 ♖e1 ♖e8 19 b3! The correct idea. White should try to open the game and exploit Black's lagging development, [Asrian,K–Sasikiran,K/World Junior Championship, Erevan 2000](#).

13...b6 14 ♕e4 ♖b8!?

This move is now one of Black's main weapons. Lots of games have already been played and this plan has confirmed it's viability.

15 ♖d1

15 b3!? The latest development. 15...♗f6?! 16 dxc5 bxc5 17 ♕b2! The point. White's Bishop is very strong now and the pressure on the g7–square is very annoying. 17...♗xe4 18 ♖xe4 [Timman,J–Karpov,A/Sanur 2000](#).

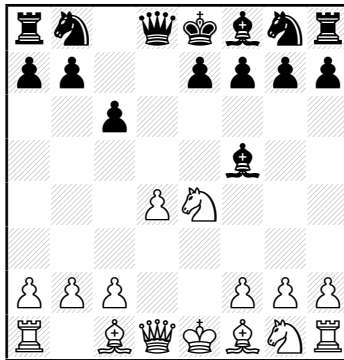
15...c4 16 ♗e5 ♗f6! 17 ♕f3 ♕b7 18 ♕xb7 ♖xb7

Now it's clear that Black has successfully solved his opening problems, achieving a comfortable blockade position and firm control over the d5–square. It's not easy to find a good plan for White– [Sadvakasov,D–Karpov,A/ Hoogeveen 1999](#).

Caro-Kann – Classical 4...Bf5 intro [B18]

Last updated: 11/06/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Bf5



5 Ng3

Russian GM Rublevsky has won many games in another rare line 5 Nc5 !? But in a recent game against GM Alexey Dreev, one of the leading experts in this line, he got no advantage after 5... Nd7 ! (5...b6 6 Nb3 e6 7 Nf3 Bd6 8 g3 Ne7 9 Bg2 h6 10 0-0 0-0 11 c4 Nd7 12 We2 Wc7 13 Be3 c5= [Becerra Rivero, J–Riazantsev, A/ICC INT 2004](#) is comfortable for Black, but no more. 5...b6 is therefore safe, reliable and ... a little unambitious.) 6 Nxb7 Wc7 ! 7 Nc5 Nxc5 Here a draw was agreed as the position after 8 dxc5 e6 doesn't promise White anything.

5... Bg6 6 Bc4

In the Main line Black is solving his problems quite successfully. So White has been looking for an advantage in old and rare continuations. Of these this line is definitely the most popular.

6 h4 h6

a) 7 Nf3 is regarded as the main continuation, see B19.

b) 7 Nh3 Not especially effective. 7...e6 8 Nf4 Bh7 9 Bc4 Nf6 10 We2 Bd6 11 c3 Nbd7 12 Ngh5 If White cannot sacrifice on e6 at this point the whole variation is ineffectual: (12 Bxe6 fxe6 13 Nxe6 We7 14 Nxc7+ Qf7 15 Wxe7+ Bxe7 16 N7f5 Bxf5 17 Nxf5 Eae8 18 Nxe6? fxe6 13 Bxe6 We7) 12...0-0= [Crouan, S–Rausis, I/National I, Sautron FRA 2003](#)

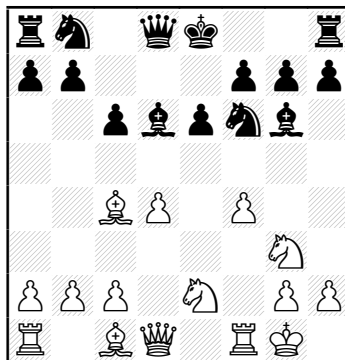
c) 7 f4!? Not very popular, but rather a dangerous continuation. By playing this way, White secures a considerable space advantage and firm control over the e5-square. On the other hand, White's dark-squared Bishop is now somewhat restricted. 7...e6 8 ♖f3 ♗d7 9 h5 ♘h7 10 ♙d3 ♙xd3 11 ♚xd3 ♗gf6! The move order is very important in this position. 12 ♙d2 ♚c7 13 ♚e2 c5! I believe that this is the best. The move is aimed against Ne5. 14 0-0-0 [Loskutov,O-Asrian,K/ St.Petersburg 1999](#).

6 ♗f3 ♗f6 7 h4 h6 8 ♗e5 The possibility of this move worried Black players so much that 6...Nf6 was out of fashion for decades. But due to the efforts of the Spanish GM Magem it has become clear that Black has sufficient resources here. It's difficult to say whether this move is better than 8.h5, but White preferred it in the elite tournaments in Linares and Dos Hermanas this year. 8...♙h7 9 ♙c4 e6 10 ♚e2 Developing and creating the threat of Nx7. 10...♗d5 Absolutely the only move. (10...♚xd4? 11 ♗xf7 with a quick mate.) 11 ♙xd5?! Too optimistic. White wins a pawn, but Black obtains fantastic compensation. Other moves should be preferred: 11...cxd5! But I definitely prefer the text as it gives Black excellent compensation for the pawn. Why should Black grab a pawn when it's possible to sacrifice one! (It's not easy to refute the stupid-looking 11...♚xd5 12 ♚h5 ♙g8, for example 13 0-0 ♗d7 14 c4 ♚xd4 15 ♗xd7 ♚xd7 16 ♙d1 ♚c7 and it's not easy to develop White's attack, although his compensation is obvious.) 12 ♚b5+ ♗d7 13 ♚xb7 ♗xe5 14 dxe5 ♙b8 The critical position for an assessment of White's plan. It doesn't look very promising for White, [Miralles,G-Speelman,J/Escaldes \(Andorra\) 1998](#).

6 ♗1e2 ♗f6 7 ♗f4 (7 h4 is more challenging) 7...e5 equalised for Black in [Ferrari,N-Lalic,B/Italy 2001](#)

6...e6 7 ♗1e2 ♙d6

7...♗f6 not fearing ♗f4, seems possible too: 8 0-0 ♙d6 (8...♗bd7 9 f4 ♗b6 [Nataf,I-Hansen,T/33rd Rilton Cup, Stockholm SWE 2003](#)) 9 f4



This old line introduced by Paul Keres in the 1950s is now in fashion again. Black has to avoid some tricks here.

a) 9...♚c7?! 10 f5! The idea behind Black's previous move was to prevent this breakthrough but nevertheless it still works! 10...exf5 11 ♗xf5 ♙xh2+?! Another careless move after which Black's position is hardly defensible. 12 ♗h1 0-0 13 ♚e1! [Belotti,B-](#)

[Solozhenkin,E/Montecatini Terme 1999](#). (13 g3! is not bad either. This move was played in Keres – Golombek, Moscow, 1956.)

b) 9...♖d7!? is also an interesting possibility. Unfortunately there are no recent games here and the theory of this line is based on an old game Eolian – Kasparov, Riga 1977 (by the way, the future World Champion was only 14 years old at the time!).

c) 9...♙f5!? A very interesting move. Black voluntarily spoils his pawn structure, but as compensation he obtains firm control over the important e4 square. Besides White's dark-squared Bishop is restricted by the f4-pawn and now has few prospects. 10 ♖xf5 exf5 11 ♗g3 g6 12 ♖e1+ ♗f8 13 ♖f3 The critical position of this line. It had been played several times previously, but now Black came up with a clear improvement. 13...♗bd7! This move was thought to be a blunder in view of 14. Qb3 attacking both the b7 and f7 pawns. 14 ♖b3 ♖c7! 15 ♙xf7 ♗g7! After this cool move it is White who has to think about equality, [Khalifman,A–Rustemov,A/Germany 2000](#).

8 ♗f4

8 0-0 is similar, if a little quieter: 8...♖c7 (8...♗d7 9 ♙f4 ♗b6 10 ♙b3 ♗d5 11 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 12 ♖d2 ♗g6 13 c4 [Fontaine,R–Beikert,G/Belfort FRA 2004](#), which is perhaps a shade better for White.) 9 f4!? The most aggressive interpretation of this position. 9...♗e7 10 ♙d3 ♗d7 11 c4 0-0-0!? A very interesting and unusual attempt. Black tries to complicate the position as much as possible. Now one can expect a very sharp encounter which is usual when Kings are castled on opposite sides of the board. (However I would prefer simple moves like 11...c5

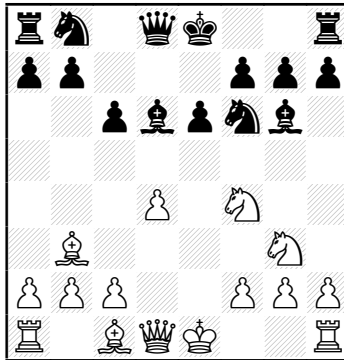
or 11...♖d8 in order to prepare kingside castling, with good play for Black. The text is much more ambitious.) 12 ♗h1 (12 c5?? doesn't win a piece but blunders two pawns after 12...♗xc5 13 dxc5 ♙xc5+) 12...♗f5 13 ♗xf5 ♙xf5 14 ♙e3 [Movsesian,S–Zeljic,R/Porec \(Croatia\) 1998](#).

8 h4! Playing h4 before ♗f4 has merits, as the following game shows, 8...h6 9 ♗f4 ♙xf4 10 ♙xf4 ♗f6 11 h5 (11 ♖d2 ♗d5 12 ♗e2 ♗d7 13 0-0-0 b5 14 ♙d3 ♙xd3 15 ♖xd3 ♗xf4 16 ♗xf4 ♖c7 17 ♖f3 [Sadvakasov,D–Korchnoi,V/Match, Astana KAZ 2003](#), Black has a problem with his King. Korchnoi bites the bullet and castles short, but Sadvakasov hits hard, low and fast.) 11...♙h7 12 0-0 ♗bd7 13 ♙b3 0-0 Black has to give up the two bishops but his position remains very difficult to crack, [Short,N–Svidler,P/Los Inmortales IV, Santo Domingo DOM 2002](#).

8...♗f6

8...♖h4!? 9 ♗gh5 ♙xh5 10 ♖xh5 ♖e7 11 ♖e2 ♗f6 12 ♙d2 ♗bd7 13 0-0-0 0-0 14 ♗b1 ♗d5 [Svidler,P–Erenburg,S/playchess.com INT 2004](#), with equal chances. These positions have been well understood since the days of Botvinnik and Tal. White's two Bishops are successfully counterbalanced by the strong Knight on d5.

9 ♙b3



9 h4?! After Black's reply it becomes clear that this aggressive move in reality is a waste of time and merely weakens White's position. There were lots of better moves. 9...♞c7! 10 ♜xg6 (After 10 ♞f3 Black can just grab the pawn without compensation 10...♙xc2 But by playing the text White admits the drawbacks of his previous move.) 10...hxg6 11 ♞f3 ♜bd7 12 ♙g5? After this natural move Black allows White no escape. It's difficult to believe as White's position looks very solid, but it's true! (The less ambitious 12 ♙b3 should be preferred.) 12...c5! Surprisingly enough, after this move (which is a novelty according to my database) it's not easy to find a reasonable defence for White— [Tiviakov,S–Dreev,A/Ubeda 1999](#). (White hoped for 12...0-0-0 13 0-0-0 which has been played before, with reasonable chances.)

9...a5 10 a4 ♜d5 11 ♜xg6 hxg6

Black has a very solid centralised position, and White's Bishop pair is of no importance here.

12 ♜e4 ♙e7 13 0-0 ♜d7 14 ♞f3 ♜7f6 15 ♜g5 ♞c7 16 g3

[Hracek,Z–Tukmakov,V/Koszalin 1999](#).

Caro-Kann – Classical 4...Bf5 mainline

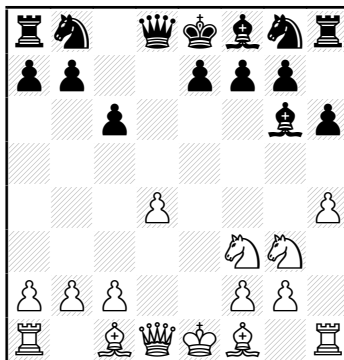
[B19]

Last updated: 10/08/04 by Andy Martin

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dx e4 4 Nxe4 Bf5

Since the Tal – Botvinnik World Title matches in the early 60s, the Classical line with 4...Bf5 has not been very popular. It had a reputation of being a solid but quite passive opening, where Black had to fight for equality without gaining real winning chances (see Geller – Hort). This would hardly suit Black players on the modern chess scene. But as time passed, Black's strategy became enriched with new ideas: he began to castle on the kingside, and boldly tried to obtain counterplay in the centre and on the queenside to compensate for White's kingside attack. Practice has shown that this strategy is perfectly viable.

5 Ng3 Bg6 6 h4 h6 7 Nf3



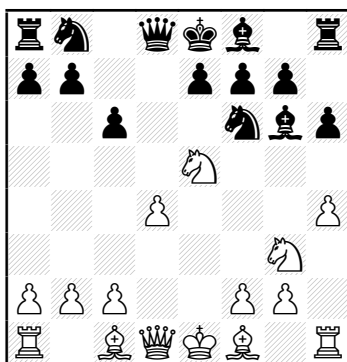
7... Nf6

Nowadays Black chooses this move order rather than 7... Nd7 (which prevents White from playing 8 Nc5). The reason is that in order to play for an edge, White more or less has to play 8 Nc5 , which gives Black a target to play against.

If he prefers the old 7... Nd7 8 h5 Nh7 9 Nd3 Nxd3 10 Wxd3

- a) 10...♖c7 11 ♕d2 ♜gf6 12 0-0-0 e6 13 ♜e4 0-0-0 14 g3 Even nowadays this line, which was introduced by Geller, is considered to be one of the most unpleasant for Black. 14...♜xe4 15 ♖xe4 [Geller,E–Hort,V/Skopje 1968](#).
- b) the move 10...e6 allows White to take the h2–b8 diagonal with 11 ♕f4 (11 ♕d2 ♖c7 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13 ♖e2 ♕d6 14 ♜e4 ♕f4 15 g3 ♕xd2+ 16 ♜exd2! [Chuprov,D–Burmakin,V/Voronezh RUS 2004](#)) 11...♜gf6 (11...♕b4+ 12 c3 ♕e7 13 0-0-0 ♜gf6 14 ♜b1 0-0 15 ♜e5 a5 Black obtained counterplay in Lutz – Dreev, World Team Championship 2001 11...♖a5+ is a third move which worked well for Black in this recent game: 12 ♕d2 ♕b4 13 ♜e4 ♜gf6 14 ♜d6+ It seems that Black can allow this check. 14...♜e7 15 ♜c4 ♕xd2+ 16 ♜fxd2 ♖c7 17 0-0-0 ♜hd8!= [Jakovenko,D–Khenkin,I/Moscow RUS 2004](#) After this steady equalizer Black went on to outplay his opponent.) 12 0-0-0 ♕e7 13 ♜b1 0-0 14 c4 (14 ♜e4 White made his space advantage count in [Shirov,A–Kramnik,V/Moscow RUS 2002](#).) 14...♖a5 15 ♜e5 ♜ad8 16 ♖e2 ♜fe8= State of the art! Black is very comfortable when his King doesn't come under fire, [Kasimdzhanov,R–Vallejo Pons,F/It, Pamplona ESP 2002](#).
- c) 10...♜gf6 11 ♕f4 makes Black choose whether to play the position with kingside castling, where the Bishop on f4 is much better placed than on d2 after 11...e6 (or to switch to the old main line with queenside castling after 11...♖a5+ 12 ♕d2 ♖c7 13 0-0-0 e6 14 ♜e4 ♜xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♜f6 16 ♖e2 0-0-0 17 g3 ♕d6 18 c4 c5 19 ♕c3 ♜he8= which seems an effective equalizer, [Karpov–Villares de Freitas/Sao Paulo Simul 2003](#)) 12 0-0-0 ♕e7
- c1) 13 ♜e4 ♜xe4 14 ♖xe4 ♜f6 15 ♖d3 ♖d5 (15...♖a5!? seems more combative. Bareev combines defence and counterattack superbly in the subsequent course of this game: [Akopian,V–Bareev,E/Engnien les Bains 2003](#).) 16 c4 ♖e4 17 ♖xe4 ♜xe4 18 ♕e3 It will take superlative technique to make something out of almost nothing in this position. Kramnik is up to the task, [Kramnik,V–Bareev,E/GMA, Wijk aan Zee NED 2003](#).
- c2) 13 ♜b1 13...0-0 14 ♜e4
- c2a) 14...♜xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♜f6 16 ♖e2 ♖d5 17 ♜e5 ♖e4 18 ♖xe4 ♜xe4 19 ♜he1 ♜f6 20 g4 ♜fd8 21 ♕e3 ♕d6 22 f3 ♜ac8 23 c4 a5?! Now Black will get ground down. It was imperative to drum up counterplay on the light squares: (23...b5 24 b3 bxc4 25 bxc4 ♜d7 26 ♜d3 ♜b8+ 27 ♜c2 ♕g3⇌) 24 a4!± [Kasparov,G–Anand,V/Linares 2003](#).
- c2b) 14...♖a5!? 15 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 16 ♜e5 ♜ad8 solid as a rock, 17 ♖g3 ♜h8 18 ♜d3! Direct and causes some confusion. (18 c4 c5! [De Firmian,N–Dreev,A/Tch–SWE 2003](#)) 18...♜d5 19 ♕d2 [Apicella,M–Bauer,C/ch–FRA, Aix les Bains FRA 2003](#).

8 ♜e5



Currently this line is White's main weapon.

8 h5 ♕h7 9 ♕d3 ♕xd3 10 ♖xd3 e6 11 ♕d2

a) 11...♗bd7 12 0-0-0 ♕e7 The critical position in this line. 13 ♖e2 (13 ♖b1!? is a small move with large consequences, [Gwaze,R–Woodward,T/Edinburgh 2003](#)) 13...0-0 14 ♗e5 c5! Opening an extra file near White's king. Now the game is somewhat similar to a Sicilian! 15 dxc5 [Xie,J–Brunner,L/Bern 1995](#).

b) 11...♕e7 12 0-0-0 0-0 13 ♖e2 (13 ♖b1 Of course by playing such prophylactic moves White can hardly fight for an opening advantage. 13...c5 Epishin's idea (c5 prior to developing the Knight) works here as well. 14 ♕e3 ♗bd7 15 ♗e4 ♖c7 Now it's clear that White hasn't managed to create any opening problems for Black. Moreover, White should play very carefully in order to avoid problems himself, [Luther,T–Rausis,I/Germany 1998](#).) 13...c5!? A new and very interesting idea. (Instead of the automatic 13...♗bd7 Black immediately opens the c–file, keeping different possibilities for developing his knight.) 14 dxc5 ♖c7! 15 ♗e5 ♗d8! 16 ♕c3 ♗c6! The correct strategy: Black doesn't hurry to regain his pawn, but instead completes his development. I believe that after the text move Black has successfully solved most of his opening problems, [Hracek,Z–Epishin,V/Germany 1998](#).

8...♕h7 9 ♕d3

This move, introduced by Ivanchuk has become very popular.

It looks more promising than 9 ♕c4 e6 10 ♖e2 ♗d5 11 ♕d2 White has a dozen or so alternatives to this move, but recently this move has received a lot of attention.

11...♗d7 (11...♕xc2!? is the critical move, but so far most people have shied away from it.) 12 ♕d3 ♕xd3 13 ♖xd3 ♗5f6 14 f4 c5 15 0-0-0 [Smirin,I–Epishin,V/Saint Vincent ITA 2000](#).

9...♕xd3

The normal way for Black to play this line.

9...♗bd7!? 10 ♕xh7 ♗xe5 11 dxe5 ♖a5+ 12 ♖f1 ♗xh7 13 ♖e2 0-0-0 14 e6 ♖d5 (14...f6 would lock the bishop down on f8, but 14...f5!? intending ...g6, ... Bg7, ...h5 and ...Nf6 is worth consideration.) 15 exf7 ♖xf7 16 ♕e3 a6?! This is a very ugly move,

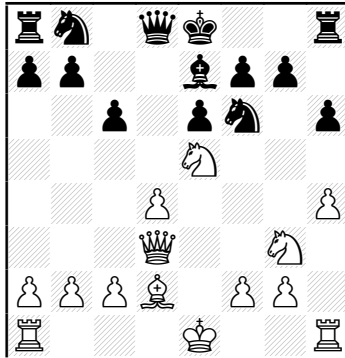
completely giving up control over the dark squares, [Leko,P–Bareev,E/Dortmund GER 2000](#).

10 ♖xd3 e6 11 ♔d2

11 ♔f4 ♗bd7 12 0-0-0 ♔e7 13 ♖b1 0-0 14 c4 c5?! This move is brilliantly refuted. Black's play was improved upon just a month later. 15 d5 ♗xe5 16 ♔xe5 ♗g4 The logical follow-up to 14...c5. However an unpleasant surprise awaits him! [Ponomariov,R–Tukmakov,V/Donetsk \(Ukraine\) 1998](#).

11 0-0? this is simply poor with the pawn on h4 sticking out like a sore thumb, 11...♔d6 12 ♔f4 0-0 13 ♖b3 ♗d5 with a clear advantage, [Iotov,V–Genov,P/Sofia 2003](#).

11...♔e7!?



This move has become popular due to the efforts of GM Vladimir Epishin, who is a leading expert in the Caro–Kann. Black delays the development of his Queen's Knight, retaining the possibility of putting it either on d7 or c6 (after ... c6–c5).

11...♗bd7 is the old main line. 12 f4 White gains space and also makes ultra-secure the position of his proud centralised e5–knight. 12...♔e7 13 0-0-0 0-0 (13...c5⇒ 14 ♖he1 0-0 15 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 16 f5∞ [McDonald,N–Hermansson,E/Budapest 2003](#) Subsequently Black negotiated the complications.) 14 ♖f3 (14 ♖e2 I doubt if this move is best here. 14...c5 15 dxc5 ♗xc5! This recapture is preferable. 16 ♔c3 ♖c7! This is best because White cannot now play 17.Ng4 as the f4–pawn is hanging, [Adams,M–Leko,P/Linares 1999](#).) 14...♖c7 15 c4! White further increases his spatial advantage, and prepares to play Bc3 without allowing ...Nd5 by Black. 15...c5 16 d5! ♖ae8 17 ♖he1 [Movsesian,S–Iordachescu,V/F.I.D.E. KO World Ch., New Del 2000](#).

12 0-0-0 0-0 13 f4

13 ♗e2!?! Quite an interesting idea. To exploit the omission of ... Nbd7 White intends a g–pawn thrust, launching a direct K–side attack. By the way, the position of the h–pawn (on h4 as opposed to h5) favours White, as it makes the g–pawn advance more powerful. 13...♗bd7 14 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 15 g4! The correct approach. At the cost of only

one pawn, White obtains a tremendous attack on the Black King, [Luther,T-Doettling,F/Schwerin 1999](#).

13...c5 14 dxc5 ♖c7

This position was tested in two of Mittelman's recent games, and in both he managed to solve his opening problems.

15 ♜he1

15 ♕c3 could well be more testing – Solozhenkin gets blown away! 15...♗d5 16 ♗h5! see [Khalifman,A-Solozhenkin,E/ECC, Rethymnon GRE 2003](#).

15...♗c6 16 ♗xc6 ♖xc6

[David,A-Mittelman,G/Antwerp 1999](#).